THE NATIONAL INTEREST

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Jonathan Clarke

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Thomas Goltz on Robert Kaplan, *Henry Rowen* on Non-proliferation, *Ray Takeyh* on Islamism, *George Walden* on Atrocities

Number 63 • Spring 2001 • $7.00

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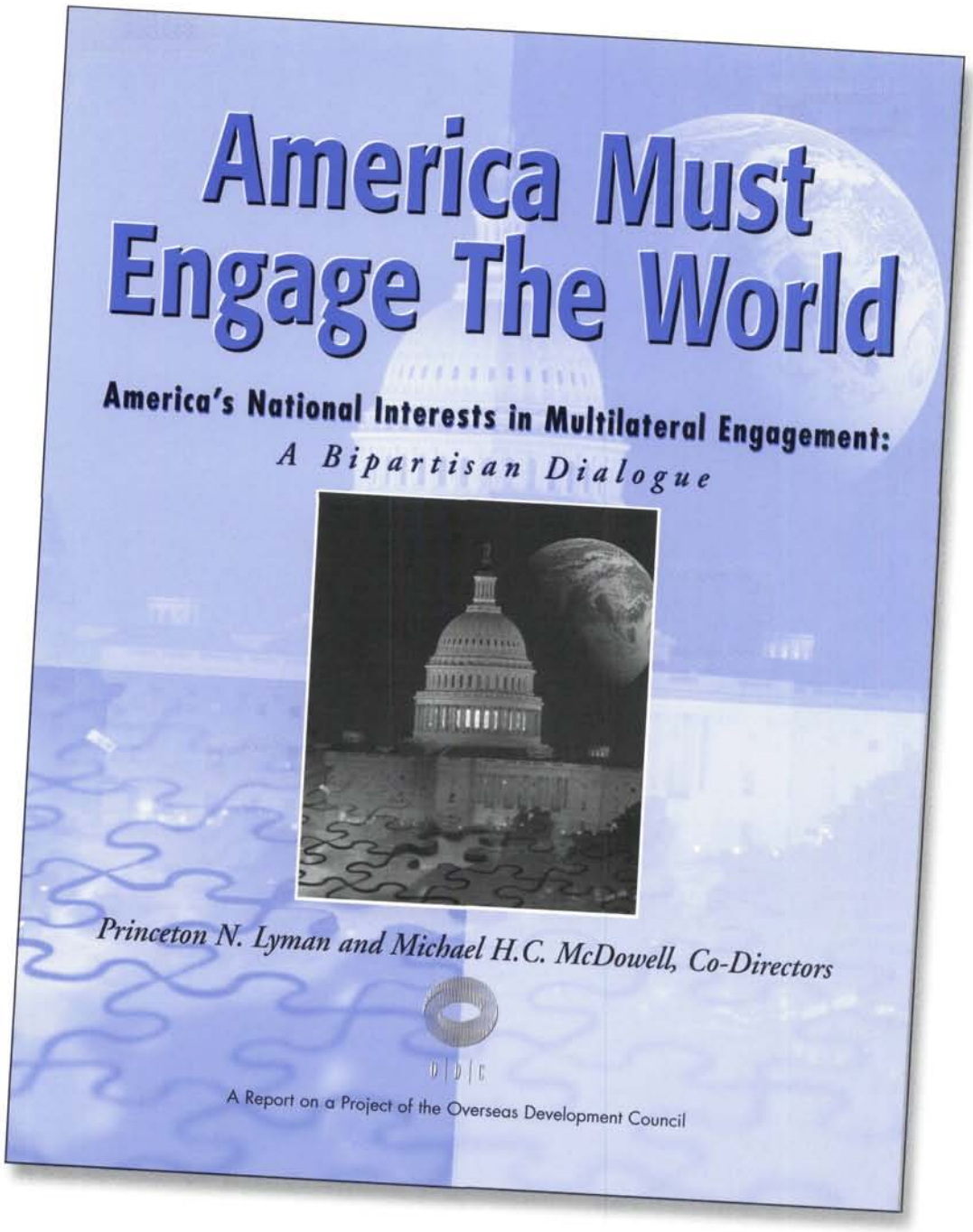
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The National Interest, P.O. Box 622, Shrub Oak, NY 10588-0622, or call (914) 962-6297
or (800) 893-8944. All other inquiries should be directed to the editorial office.

The National Interest (ISSN 0884-9382) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter issues by National Affairs, Inc. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in P.A.I.S., Historical Abstracts, International Political Science Abstracts, U.S. Political Science Documents, Political Science Abstracts, and America: History and Life; and available on microfilm from University Microfilms International. Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. © 2001 by National Affairs, Inc. *The National Interest* is printed by Kirby Lithographic Co., Inc. It is distributed in the U.S. and Canada by Ingram Periodicals (1240 Heil Quaker Blvd., La Vergne, TN 37086-7000, 615-793-5522) and Bernhard DeBoer (113 East Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110, 973-667-9300) and in the U.K. by Comag Special Services (Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QX, 44-1895-444055).
BPA International Membership Applied for December 1999.

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A Choice of Europes

David Calleo

THE FADING away of the bipolar world has sent many states into a sort of identity crisis. The travails of "transformation" have been obvious in former Soviet countries and in China, but are also present in the West. Some Americans believe the "new world order" confers upon them a protracted vocation for world hegemony. The American Century is to become the American Millennium. The public reacts with an unstable mixture of indifference, satisfaction, skepticism and resentment.

While America's political imagination is bemused by its unipolar scenario, many Europeans are attracted by plans for a more cohesive and independent Europe. Some Europeans are openly skeptical that American hegemony guarantees their interests now that the Cold War is over, and thus want to reform NATO and develop more autonomous military capabilities. How Europe itself evolves is widely recognized to be among the major determinants of the world order that does eventually emerge. A stronger and more self-reliant Europe, together with a rapidly growing China, possibly India, and perhaps even a re-invigorated Russia, also implies a more balanced or "plural" world order. An emerging pluralist paradigm thus challenges the dominant unipolar paradigm.

These ruminations have familiar theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. The unipolar paradigm reflects a hegemonic view of global politics, according to which a benign leading power is required to bring order to an anarchic world. The pluralist vision, by contrast, shuns hegemonic "hyperpowers" and favors a variety of regional systems with a global balance and a division of responsibilities among several clusters of power. Both paradigms are infused with globalism, but define it differently. Unipolar globalism emphasizes how an open and democratic world often thrives in company with political, economic and cultural hegemony—as in the Pax Britannica of the nineteenth century or the Pax Americana of the twentieth. Pluralists, by contrast, prefer what might be called a "constitutionalist" form of globalism, one that emphasizes the diversity of an interdependent world—with proliferating centers of economic growth, initiative and power. Pluralists favor that diversity for its own sake and are leery of global centralization and cultural homogeneity.

In practice, the paradigms coexist and blend, and each flourishes on both sides of the Atlantic. Which vision appeals more is often a matter of historical taste and imagination—linked, of course, to all sorts of national and group interests and identities. Abstract predispositions, however, have to come to terms with geopolitical realities.

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Countervailing Realities

THE MOST obvious geopolitical reality at the turn of the century is the economic and military pre-eminence of the United States. Convinced pluralists discount that primacy and focus on longer term trends that seem to imply a broader dispersal of power. Today's world is too complex to allow for any certainty about the future. Both paradigms have obvious explanatory strengths, but also particular vulnerabilities. America's inner limitations as a hegemonic power bring the unipolar paradigm into question, and U.S. economic strength seems undermined by the country's big and rising external deficit. The size and longevity of that deficit suggest that America's economy is structured so that it habitually absorbs more than it produces. Earlier, this could be explained by the heavy military burdens of the Cold War. Now it can only be ascribed to chronic low rates of saving and excessive consumption, frequently topped up by excessive investment at home or overseas.

These habits are hard to give up, and others depend on them. Not only would lowering consumption imply lowering living standards at home, but much of Asia's prosperity is bound up in America's trade deficit. The United States is the world's "buyer of last resort." Nevertheless, managing this deficit addiction requires regular heavy financing from abroad. Thanks in good part to the international role of the dollar, this financing has generally been easy to arrange. Most recently, it has been provided by a huge influx of foreign capital investing in the United States, but the pricking of the stock market bubble in recent months heralds the end of this particular form of easy finance. The growing significance of the euro suggests that future forms may be more costly and disabling.[1]

The United States also has broader handicaps for the role of world hegemon. Impulses toward "isolationism" and "unilateralism" are deeply rooted in the political culture. Constitutional arrangements, which limit the power of the federal executive and the professional civil service, make it difficult to sustain balanced, coherent and well-administered long-term policies, sensitive to the needs of other countries. The United States, of course, has conducted a hegemonic foreign policy with notable success through a good part of the past half century. But this required a severe distortion of the Constitution—in particular, a dramatic extension of presidential power, provoked by the shocks of two world wars and the prolonged Cold War that followed.[2]

Since the late 1960s, the country has been drifting back to its traditional balance. Doubtless the problems of the Clinton presidency were rather special, but nearly every other presidency since the days of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon has had its own variety of constitutional imbroglio. The other constitutional elements—the Congress, the courts and the states—have been banding together to cut the imperial presidency down to size.[3] Given the special circumstances of the recent presidential election, the new Bush administration seems unlikely to reverse a trend that reaches back over seven of its predecessors. In short,

[1]For a more extensive discussion, see my "The Strategic Implications of the Euro", *Survival* (Spring 1999).

[2]See my "The U.S. Post-Imperial Presidency and Transatlantic Relations", *The International Spectator* (July-September 2000).

[3]An obvious countermeasure is to use international organizations—the UN, IMF, WTO, NATO—to bypass the other constitutional branches, just as European governments often use the EU to circumvent opposition in national parliaments. Attempts to do this during the Clinton administration were not particularly successful, however.

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although visions of world hegemony may beguile large sections of America's political elite, the country generally has less and less tolerance for the burdens and discipline needed to exercise such a role. In such circumstances, it is all too easy for enthusiastic elites to get overextended, with commitments that the country will prove unwilling to sustain.

Overextension, of course, is the fatal vice of any hegemon. America's long-term strategy for avoiding it has been to build up a genuine European "partner." In effect, this strategy is a way of synthesizing unipolar and pluralist visions of the future. A strong European Union, able to take primary responsibility for maintaining peace in its own space, and on good terms with Russia, would relieve the United States of a heavy burden and free resources for maintaining order elsewhere, most notably in Asia. This is not because Asia is more important to the United States, but because Europe has the makings of an indigenous balance, whereas Asia does not.

Arguably, the principal impediment to this hegemonic-pluralist synthesis has not been America's opposition but Europe's own lingering disunity. The end of the Cold War, however, has created a new Europe, waiting to be pulled together. The EU has ambitious plans to do that pulling. But like America in its activities throughout the world, the EU risks overextending itself in Europe with commitments that its own political structure will not sustain. Various U.S. interests, meanwhile, have started worrying about losing military hegemony in NATO and show signs of growing hostility to European initiatives. If the West is not careful, its American and European halves, both overextended, will end up defeating each other. NATO will suffer accordingly. The way to avoid such a tragically stupid outcome is to devise a new European system with realistic roles for the European Union and for the United States. "Realistic" means in harmony with the essential characteristics and interests of each. America has its limitations, but so, of course, does Europe.

A Hegelian Synthesis

RIVALRIES among the European states have dominated most of modern history—never more than in the first half of the twentieth century. Supposedly, today's European Union has put an end to the old quarreling Europe. But the EU has a very particular constitutional character, formed within the bipolar system of the Cold War, and a realistic view of the EU's future role depends on a realistic view of its inner character.

From the beginning there have been four models for Western Europe's constitution: "Atlantic Europe", "Federal Europe", "Gaullist Europe" and "Nobody's Europe." Today's EU has evolved as a hybrid product of all four. Europe has given birth to a new political form, a sort of Hegelian synthesis between a centralized Continental government and a multinational state system. It is essential to understand that Europe's states have created this Union not to give up their national sovereignty but to enhance it. Since these states are intimately interdependent, their national domestic or foreign policies are unlikely to succeed if at cross purposes. National states have more real sovereignty—more capacity to achieve what their populations want—by constantly negotiating and compromising together. But Europe's states impose this collective regime on themselves only when doing so clearly seems to increase their capacity for achieving national goals. Hence, during the Cold War they ardently pursued "integration" in the economic sphere but not in defense, where, under an American protectorate in NATO, they could find greater safety with less constraint.

Europe's hybrid community was greatly helped by the Cold War. NATO

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allowed it to avoid the thorny issues of collective military security. The Soviets were contained and Germany was divided and occupied. Western competition over *Mitteleuropa* was pre-empted by the Soviets. Western Europe's leading powers—France and Germany—thus found it relatively easy to collaborate. Together they provided a sort of joint hegemony to keep the project moving forward. Meanwhile, American demands for open trade and investment were a powerful incentive for all West Europeans to pursue their own further economic integration.

The end of the Cold War disturbed this cozy arrangement. German reunification upset the balance between France and Germany. With the Soviet collapse and a weak Russia, the liberated states of Central and Eastern Europe not only threatened to generate a swarm of troubles—as Yugoslavia soon demonstrated—but constituted a vacuum threatening to draw in Germany and to arouse hostile British and French reactions. In other words, the end of the Cold War promised a return to Europe's anarchical state system and its traditional German problem. A post-Soviet crisis of transformation struck Europe in the West as well as in the East.

From Maastricht to Nice

FRANCE and Germany met this challenge boldly at Maastricht in 1991. Their solution was a radical double expansion of the postwar confederacy, newly re-christened the European Union. To begin with, the earlier European Community's functions were to be greatly expanded. A monetary union was to consolidate the single market, strengthen Europe financially, and, in the process, create a rival to the dollar. A common foreign and security policy was to proceed in parallel. Common defense forces, able to act with the American allies in NATO, or without them if necessary, were set to follow in due course. NATO itself would be reformed to limit U.S. hegemony and create a more genuinely balanced structure. Along with this broadening of functions, the EU also planned to enlarge its membership radically. At the Copenhagen Summit in 1993, the EU committed itself to negotiate with several former communist countries in Europe. The list kept growing and, in due course, also came to include Cyprus, Malta and even Turkey. The former Cold War "neutrals"—Austria, Finland and Sweden—joined in 1995. It became commonplace to speak of an EU of thirty members. In effect, the EU was setting out to turn itself into the new Pan-European system.

The concomitant expansion of function and membership naturally implied a significant reform of internal governing arrangements. Adding financial and military dimensions demanded the capacity for rapid decision-making in crises and long-term planning to avoid unpleasant surprises. Adding a large number of new members, with newly planted democracies and undeveloped economies, would make the leisurely interstate negotiations of the old European Community increasingly dysfunctional. Accordingly, streamlining EU decision-making was an integral part of Maastricht's grand strategy. In principle, this streamlining could be accomplished by a turn toward genuine federalism. The Union might move away from its intergovernmental character toward a real central government on German or U.S. models, perhaps with a French or American-style presidency. To work, however, such a project would presumably require a Europe-wide organization of political parties—a project difficult to imagine in today's Europe of fifteen, let alone in a Europe of thirty.

If the EU's history is any guide, the most likely outcome is not a federal Europe but a further adaptation of the hybrid confederal model evolving since the

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1950s. But even this course will demand significant changes. If the locus of decision-making is to remain with the Council of Ministers, a membership of thirty will demand a much wider use of qualified majority voting. A few small countries cannot be allowed regularly to hold up all the rest. National voting strength will have to bear some relationship to the relative populations and economies of the member states. These changes inevitably mean that Western Europe's smaller states will lose relative influence. In a Europe of thirty, Germany and France are still Europe's major powers, but Denmark and even Holland are not what they were.

The summit at Nice this past December brought these issues to a head. Negotiations were exceptionally arduous, protracted and acrimonious. There was some progress toward confederal reform. Votes in the Council and representation in the European Parliament were re-weighted in favor of the big states. The national veto was restricted further. Small member states, however, refused to give up their right to one commissioner each. As things stand, there will be twenty-seven commissioners before some sort of rotation system is installed. In principle, the way was widened for "enhanced cooperation" among states eager to move ahead of the others in one sphere or another.[4]

There is much speculation that this may be the vehicle for creating an inner core able to act decisively and impose itself on the rest. In theory, this inner core might itself be a federation, presumably built around France and Germany. But it is far from clear that either would really be willing to commit itself to any centralized federal construction. And it seems extremely unlikely that Britain would do so. Most probably, therefore, even the inner core will remain a confederacy. Its strength will depend, as it always has, on the strength of the Franco-German commitment to it.

The best that can be said is that the EU's constitutional reforms are problematic and will probably take a long time. The fierce resistance and limited success demonstrated at Nice suggest disagreeable alternatives. The EU will either have to renounce expanding its functions or limit its membership. For those who do not want a strong European Union, like the British, enlargement without successful federal reform is quite acceptable; it means a weaker Union. But given the unlikelihood of federal reform, why do those who want a stronger and more cohesive Europe not oppose enlargement? At this juncture they are mesmerized by what is undoubtedly a compelling geopolitical reality: The Europe they are dealing with today is Pan-Europe, including not only Central and Eastern Europe, but Russia. In many respects, it also includes the United States. What it requires, therefore, is not merely an updated West European confederation but a replacement for the Soviet and bipolar systems as well.

Unfortunately, this appears to be a task beyond the consensus-building powers of a confederal European Union. To fulfill such a Pan-European role, the EU must turn itself into an imperial federation—a hyperpower on its own, strong and centralized enough to dominate the Russians and replace the Americans. Since Europe's modern history—from Philip II to Hitler—richly demonstrates the futility and danger of attempting to subjugate Europe's states to a single centralizing power, perhaps it is time to begin seriously exploring schemes that do not start by presuming what seems impossible: a strong and cohesive EU that stretches itself to cover Pan-Europe or a Europe run from America.

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[4]Draft approved by the Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the Member States. See http://ue.eu.int/cig/nice/nicefr.asp?lang=en

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A Choice of Three

LOGICALLY, three models present themselves for organizing Pan-Europe: bipolar, unified and tripolar. In bipolar Pan-Europe, the West claims its Cold War victories; Western institutions enlarge; NATO and the EU eventually include most of the countries liberated by the Soviet collapse, except for Russia itself; a crippled Russia receives compensatory aid and perhaps diplomatic respect, but is kept at arm's length.

In the second model, unified Pan-Europe, the old East and West of the Cold War join intimately to create a closely integrated Eurasian system. The European Union and NATO extend eastward—and eventually embrace rather than exclude Russia.

In the third model, tripolar Pan-Europe, the EU, Russia and the United States form three distinct but articulated poles. Each, while tied to the others, remains sufficiently distinct so as not to undermine its own cohesion. Neither the EU nor NATO becomes Pan-European. Instead, each remains a critical Western element within a larger and looser Pan-European superstructure. The European Union, for example, extends full membership only to Central and East European countries whose political economies are sufficiently convergent with the West to be absorbed successfully. The EU does not imagine including Russia but nevertheless develops close economic relations with it, and also with the other former Soviet states. The United States remains present in Pan-Europe through NATO, but less as the active manager of European security than as the ultimate guarantor of Western Europe against a resumption of Russian (or German) aggression, or an explosion of violence in the Near and Middle East or the Mediterranean. NATO thus grows more European and less American-dominated, as the EU develops autonomous diplomatic and defense institutions capable of acting efficaciously either inside or outside of NATO. Russia does not actually join this more European NATO, but cooperates closely with it through some overarching Pan-European security structure.

The Drawbacks of Model One . . .

OF THE three models, which is preferable? The first model, reconstituting bipolar Europe, implies not only Russia's permanent estrangement from an Atlanticized Europe, but its enfeeblement and even dissolution, presumably for the benefit of its East European or Central Asian neighbors. Such a course hardly seems in anyone's long-term interest. The vision of an anarchical Russia, with its old nuclear arsenal and weapons experience privatized, should provoke deep caution among us all.

Many people in America and Europe do, of course, dream of a weak, dependent, perhaps dismembered Russia, and would like to see Ukraine and the states of Central Asia and the Baltics bound tightly to the West. Old German fantasies of Middle Europe flicker into half-life. But these fantasies of Russian dissolution flirt with hubris on a grand scale, in the case of the United States as well as of Germany. The volatile boundaries of Eastern and Central Europe have, again and again, been fault lines for modern Europe's political and military earthquakes. No one should begrudge the nations along this fault line their new-found freedom. But the West should be careful that this new liberty is not allowed to lead to a fresh cycle of conflict between Russia and the West—or among the Western powers themselves.

The Russians, after all, are in the midst of a heroic effort to transform themselves into a modern nation-state, a

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transformation that implies not only democracy at home but also a less intrusive relationship with surrounding states. Chechnya notwithstanding, it is nowadays possible to imagine Russian hegemony over its "near abroad" that is not crushingly oppressive. In the interests of wider Eurasian order, the West should encourage these civilizing trends—not least by refusing to take advantage of Russia's apparent weakness. The West has no real interest in replacing Russian influence in Ukraine, or its authority in the trans-Caucasus and Central Asia. Seriously meddling to defeat Russian interests in these neighboring places risks unloosing a swarm of demons that Western powers have neither the means nor the vocation to master.

The resulting Eurasian vacuum would not only be a fertile breeding ground for organized crime, neighborhood genocide and stampedes of terrified populations, it would also be a highly counterproductive environment for West European integration. It cannot be healthy to have the German government back in Berlin, with Moscow enfeebled and Eastern Europe weak. It would be hard for Germany to resist being drawn into that revisionist vortex. Germany unbalanced in Middle Europe would alarm France and Britain and undermine the foundations of the European Union. At the same time, a weak Russia, with only a feeble hold on its huge Siberian empire, would be a menace to stability in Asia as well as in Europe.

A reborn bipolar model with a weak Russia would also very likely undermine transatlantic relations. Expanding NATO and keeping Russia at arm's length implies continuing American domination of the alliance. But with Russia so weak and isolated, the United States would be too strong for the West Europeans to welcome as hegemon. In any event, Europe's new security problems are such that close Russian cooperation is needed for managing many of them. Such cooperation seems unlikely if the Americans, playing an active hegemonic role in NATO, are contending with Russia in its own near abroad. A not unlikely consequence is that the Europeans would begin to take their distance from the United States.

The principal danger is probably not that the United States will dedicate itself seriously to Pan-European hegemony. Provoking a desperate Russia is too dangerous, and the regional problems are too intractable and too marginal to America's own vital interests. In any case, America's enthusiasm or capability for actually playing an extended hegemonic role is too inconstant. But the United States may well allow itself to drift toward such a policy sufficiently to embitter the Russians and provoke new waves of paranoia and imperialism among them. The same could be said about any revival of German ambitions for *Mitteleuropa*.

In summary, the old bipolar model cannot be patched up to suit the new Pan-European future. Pan-Europe cannot be built around the vision of America's military protectorate and Europe's *acquis communautaire* extended to all and sundry, except for Russia. Given the geographical realities, a successful Pan-European system is unlikely without a strong and benign Russia—preferably a federal nation-state that is peaceful, democratic, multi-ethnic and prosperous. If such a well-intentioned Russia does not evolve, Europe's future will be grim. Bipolar Pan-Europe favors this worst outcome by anticipating it. For better or for worse, Russia is a great power with a major role in European security and prosperity—both in its own near abroad and in Middle Europe generally. But Russia's role, like that of the United States, or indeed of the EU, should be contained within a cooperative Pan-European framework with a structured bias toward collective rather than unilateral action.

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. . . *And of Model Two*

IF RUSSIA does become a reasonable European country, why not aim for our second formula—a closely integrated Pan-Europe? Logically, such a model implies Russian membership in NATO and the EU. Making Russia comfortable with such an arrangement would require profound internal changes in both organizations. In the Atlantic Alliance, it would mean not only turning away from American hegemony but also from NATO's essential character as a transatlantic counterbalance to Russia. While this might suit Russia, it would not suit the West. It would be foolish for the Western states to throw away their own transatlantic alliance, even if Russia does become a model European citizen. Few countries presented with weak neighbors are safe from the imperial virus, and Russia certainly seems unlikely to be an exception. In short, while any stable Pan-European system will require Russian cooperation, it will also require re-insurance against a resurgent Russian threat. Not only does the Atlantic Alliance still seem the most secure way to deter that threat, but it also continues the other advantages of the old bipolar system. The American presence deters aggressive behavior from West European states toward each other, as well as toward Russia or the United States itself. And it also gives European states considerable control over American policy.

It could be argued that Russia would be contained even better by bringing it into the Western alliance, as was done with Germany in the 1950s. The parallel, however, is not very exact or convincing. Nazi Germany surrendered unconditionally. Thereafter, it was menaced by the Soviets and occupied—in both West and East. Even the Federal Republic's constitution and government were largely imposed by its new Western allies. It is hard to see how these conditions could fit Russia. Today's Russia is certainly weak, but it is not occupied, nor has it been brought to its present condition by a Western conquest. The Soviet retreat was, after all, voluntary. Arguably, it was mainly brought about by essentially beneficent forces within Russia itself.[5] It seems unwise, as well as ungenerous, to regard today's weakened Russia as a defeated power, easily malleable to Western designs and fated to remain a negligible force in Europe's future. A reliable Pan-European order seems unlikely to be built on such assumptions. Militarily and geopolitically, Russia remains too big either to be kept out of Pan-Europe or to be incorporated into Western Europe.

The economic side of the integrated Pan-European model seems even less plausible than the military. Trying to include Russia within the European Union seems a forlorn cause, unless the EU abandons its pursuit of economic and political integration. It is questionable whether such a bloated and denatured EU could survive its own centrifugal impulses.

A Tripolar Pan-Europe

BY A PROCESS of elimination, the third model seems the most reasonable—an articulated or tripolar Pan-Europe. Essentially, it adapts and rearranges the parts of the old

[5]It seems inaccurate historically and imprudent geopolitically to assume that East European resistance brought down the Soviets. The persistent courage of those who kept defying the Soviets and their collaborators, above all in Poland, did demoralize the "satellite" communist regimes and inspire opposition forces within the Soviet Union itself. But it did not actually throw the Soviets out of their empire. The retreat from Central Europe, the liquidation of that part of Stalin's World War II legacy, was something the Soviets, under Gorbachev, themselves decided to do.

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European and bipolar systems to suit a more cooperative coexistence with the Russians, as well as a more balanced Atlantic Alliance. It builds new Pan-European institutions, as opposed to weakening old institutions by giving them impossibly overextended new roles. Thus NATO remains essentially Western, preserving something of its old bipolar, hegemonic, implicitly anti-Russian character. But this anti-Russian aspect of NATO remains dormant unless needed. Meanwhile, the West European states, their own security cooperation intensified around EU institutions, assume primary responsibility for managing their own near abroad. They remain in alliance with the Americans, but also in close collaboration with the Russians.

NATO, while remaining a Western construction, develops a cooperative superstructure that includes the Russians—arrangements continuing along the lines of the NATO-Russia Charter and Partnership for Peace. The institutional linkage for broad Pan-European security might develop through a reorganized Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), perhaps endowed with a regional Security Council of major states—a structure analogous to the "Contact Group" that proved the way to organize Pan-European cooperation in the Yugoslav wars.[6] An OSCE framework, encouraging multilateral and rule-based interventions, should help to soften and civilize Russian predominance in its own near abroad. In due course it could also be extended to the Middle East and Africa. Meanwhile, the United States and Russia would cultivate their common security interests in the Far East. The European Union and the United States would remain bound by a broad Atlantic Alliance, not only to sustain a more European NATO but also to collaborate to define and promote a global economic agenda.

The EU itself remains an essentially West and Central European construction, but adds a new superstructure of formal Pan-European economic arrangements, reaching out to all the EU's neighbors. Ideally, Russia should be progressively integrated into the looser Pan-European economy. Russia and other Central Asian states could well become Western Europe's privileged long-term suppliers of energy and raw materials. With a decent political and legal framework, parts of Russian industry could become competitive and attractive for foreign investors. And should Russia rejuvenate its high-technology sector, its firms could become highly interesting partners for European and American firms alike.

The tripolar approach to Pan-Europe assumes that the United States, the European Union and Russia are each too large and too different to merge together within a single, closely integrated system. Their respective capacities for democratic politics and harmonious economic and social development are better served by having them remain distinct entities, sharing a new regional superstructure. This means that NATO and the EU remain Western rather than Pan-European. Such deliberate self-limitation runs counter to the natural tendency to build the future on organizations that have proved themselves in the past. Both institutions have been hugely successful, but trying now to

[6]The Contact Group comprised five powers (the United States, Russia, France, Germany and the UK), in conjunction with the co-chairmen of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia. Its main achievement—which laid the basis for a settlement—was the mid-1994 "Contact Group Plan", which allowed the Serbs to retain 49 percent of Bosnia (as opposed to 70 percent under Vance-Owen) and assigned the rest to the Bosnian-Croat federation. The plan also had the unforeseen consequence of driving a wedge between Milosevic, who supported it, and the Bosnian Serbs, who did not.

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extend either one to all of Pan-Europe misreads their essential character and the reasons for their postwar success. To imagine using the EU as the Pan-European framework is to see it as a nascent federation, or new Napoleonic (or German) empire, rather than as the confederacy of nation-states that it is. Similarly, trying to extend NATO to Pan-Europe is to misunderstand NATO's character as a defensive alliance, to see it as a nascent Atlantic empire—something neither Americans nor Europeans would long sustain. It bases Europe's future on America's overextension. By contrast, an articulated Pan-European system preserves both the essential EU and the essential NATO, without destroying them by overextension. Instead, it uses both as building blocks within a larger and looser regional framework.

An articulated Pan-European model that presupposes continuing Western and Eastern cores poses the delicate question of boundaries between them. The Russians objected strongly to NATO's expansion, presumably because they saw it as a way of reconstituting the bipolar system on worse terms for themselves. The putative eastward expansion of the European Union has not aroused the same immediately hostile Russian reaction. But an enlargement of EU membership would eventually raise the issue of what security guarantees were involved and how they would be met in practice. The model would probably work better if the major centers kept themselves concentrated and held back from filling all the available spaces. The European Union, wary of giving the Russians legitimate grounds for antagonism, or of destabilizing its own institutions by too rapid growth, would expand only slowly and selectively. A Europeanized NATO might parallel the EU's eastward growth but not lead the way. While the EU's association agreements would proliferate and intensify within Eurasia, and include Russia in some fashion or another, the former communist states would also be encouraged to develop special ties among themselves. East Europeans would be cautioned not to neglect links with the Russians.

Behind the tripolar model lies a broad pluralist perspective. It envisages an interstate structure that acknowledges and values the distinctiveness of nation-states, while creating machinery for their cooperation—arrangements that respect the cultural limits of democratic political consensus and aim for a balanced assignment and sharing of regional responsibilities among the great powers.

Why Pan-Europe?

IF THE heterogeneity of the constituent Pan-European elements so limits their integration, why envisage Pan-European structures at all? Beyond the EU and NATO, why not rely on the existing global organizations—the UN Security Council, International Monetary Fund, World Bank or Groups of Seven or Eight? Why is a Pan-European layer of organizations needed? There are several answers.

To begin with, many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, or even in Central Asia and the Middle East, passionately desire to join the EU or NATO but do not fit—economically, militarily or politically. Economically, it is important that these countries be included in structures that promote whatever degree of Pan-European economic assistance and intercourse is sustainable. Politically, former Soviet countries are re-inforced in their new democratic habits by belonging to a fellowship of advanced democratic societies. Militarily, as Russia revives, some of these countries may have to accept *de facto* Russian hegemony, as indeed others, like Serbia, may have to accept Western hegemony, even if they do

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not like it. It is important that such countries belong to some Pan-European organization that sets common principles for the rights of states and individuals and provides collective institutions to foster those rights. In practice, of course, the efficacy of such institutions must depend on whether the three major poles actually subscribe to the self-limiting principles of Pan-European cooperation.

This brings us to perhaps the real reason for Pan-European institutions. The ideal of "Europe", for all the ambiguous and bloody history behind it, retains a powerful capacity for promoting consensus around a variety of humane political values—not only among the members of the EU and their would-be partners in Central Europe, but also in Eastern Europe and in Russia itself, perhaps even in nearby parts of the Muslim world, and certainly in America. The concept of Europe is therefore a powerful asset to promote ideals that ought to be universal but cannot be reliably sustained on a global basis. This is not to say that the humane ideals associated with Europe should not be promoted and defended globally. But it is to acknowledge a special obligation to make these ideals prevail in Europe—an obligation shared by all the children of European civilization, Americans and Russians included.

There is no reason to throw away such a powerful asset on the grounds that it seems less ambitious than the pursuit of a universal world order. The real truth is that the world can only progress toward anything like a rule of law by consolidating such islands of humane order, sustained by pride in shared cultural values. Europeans, thanks to both the horrors and accomplishments of their history, enjoy a special consciousness of the rights of individuals, societies and states. They ought to be able to act in their own space according to that consciousness without having to rely on the United Nations, whose own consensus and capacity for action is necessarily of a lower intensity. In effect, Pan-Europe should become an efficacious example of the possibilities of re-inforced cooperation on a global scale. Entrusting the application of universal values to the regional structure of Pan-Europe, moreover, has another particular advantage. It unhooks European support for these values from American pretensions to world hegemony, pretensions that greatly divide Europeans and threaten world order.

While the intellectual case for an articulated Pan-Europe may be powerful, there are also serious reasons for skepticism about its practical prospects. Success will require resolute reasonableness from Russians, Europeans and Americans alike. Russia must overcome the dead weight of its brutal and dysfunctional past and find a worthy modern version of itself. The United States will need to steel itself for a long period of attentive self-restraint. As for the Europeans, they may be expected often to disappoint their own expectations, or to take longer and more circuitous routes to realizing them. They will always have divisions among themselves. They are too talented and energetic for things to be otherwise. But we are speaking of nations whose civilizations ennoble mankind and whose creativity and humanity are far from exhausted. Their problems should be considered against the magnitude of what they are attempting, and what they have already accomplished.

Nor should we forget that the rest of the world has a good deal riding on Europe's success. For no country is this more true than for the United States. A strong, balanced and stable Pan-European system will immeasurably strengthen the West and enrich its values. It would be a giant step toward a world whose problems are manageable. Without such a Europe, America's unipolar fate is likely to prove a curse laid upon its future. □

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Getting Hegemony Right

G. John Ikenberry

IN MAY 1999 the Oxford Union debated the proposition, "Resolved, the United States is a rogue state." The resolution was ultimately defeated, but around the world there is growing unease about a global order dominated by American power—power unprecedented, unrestrained and unpredictable. The unease is felt even by America's closest allies. "The United States of America today predominates on the economic level, the monetary level, on the technological level, and in the cultural area in the broadest sense of the word", French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine observed in a speech in Paris in early 1999. "It is not comparable, in terms of power and influence, to anything known in modern history." European diplomats, following Védrine's coining of the term, have begun calling the United States a "hyperpower." During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States kept each other in check. Today the restraints are less evident, and this has made American power increasingly controversial.

This is an unexpected turn of events. Just a little over a decade ago many pundits argued that the central problem of U.S. foreign policy was the graceful management of the country's decline. Paul Kennedy's famous book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, argued that the United States would go the way of all great powers—down. Japan was on the rise and Europe was awakening. World politics after the Cold War, it was widely assumed, was to be profoundly multipolar.

But the distribution of world power took a dramatic turn in America's favor. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline in ideological rivalry, lagging economic fortunes in Japan and continental Europe, growing disparities in military and technological expenditure, and America's booming economy all intensified power disparities during the 1990s. Today it is not decline that the United States must manage but the fear, resentment and instabilities created by a decade of rising American power.

A global backlash to U.S. power is not inevitable, however, particularly if the United States remembers its own political history. Our leaders have the ideas, means and political institutions that can allow for stable and cooperative order even in the midst of sharp and shifting asymmetries of power. The United States faced this problem after World War II and solved it by building what might be called a "stakeholder" hegemony. America can do it again today.

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The Dangers of Success

THE UNITED STATES has a hegemony problem for a simple reason: It started the decade of the 1990s as the world's only superpower and then proceeded to have a better decade than any other power. Disparities in economic and military power between the United States and the other major states widened. Between 1990 and 1998, U.S. economic growth (27 percent) was almost twice that of the European Union (15 percent) and three times that of Japan (9 percent).[1] The weakness of the euro since its launch is ultimately a result of these divergent European and U.S. economic trends. While Europe and Japan have struggled with economic restructuring, America has ridden the wave of the "New Economy" and rising productivity. The United States also reduced defense spending at a slower rate after the Cold War than the other major powers, resulting in greater relative military capabilities by the end of the 1990s. In fact, it has come close in recent years to monopolizing military-related research and development, spending roughly 80 percent of the world's total.[2] These developments have resulted in an extremely lopsided distribution of world power. The U.S. economy has slowed in recent months, but the disparities in wealth creation remain.

While such brute material disparities might normally be hidden below the surface, recent developments have rendered them salient and provocative. The U.S.-led NATO air campaign over Kosovo in 1999 provided at times dramatic—and, to countries such as China and Russia, disturbing—evidence of America's military and technological advantage. The squabble between the United States and Germany over the leadership of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also gave the impression that America had acquired a taste for dominance. Washington similarly bullied Japan during the East Asian financial crisis, opposing Tokyo's plan for an Asian Monetary Fund and insisting on American-approved remedies. Bipartisan support for a national missile defense, despite the opposition of the other major states and its potentially unsettling consequences for world security relationships, is another source of resentment and suspicion. In the meantime, the expansion and integration of world markets—unfolding under the banner of globalization—are seen by many as a Washington-directed phenomenon that spreads American values and disproportionately favors American interests. For these and many other reasons, it is widely believed around the world today that the global distribution of power is dangerously out of balance.

Realist thinkers argue that what is happening is not surprising. Balance of power theory makes a clear prediction: Weaker states will resist and balance against the predominant state. According to realists, security—indeed survival—is the fundamental goal of states, and, because states cannot ultimately rely on the commitments or guarantees of other states to ensure their security, they will be very sensitive to their relative power position. When powerful states emerge, secondary states will seek protection in countervailing coalitions of weaker states. The alternative is to risk domination.[3] A leading scholar of balance of power theory, Kenneth Waltz, argues that with the end

[1] Calculated from OECD statistics (July 1999 web edition). GDP measures are figured at 1990 prices and exchange rates.

[2] See International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1999/2000* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999). For additional indicators of an intensification of U.S. power, see William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World", *International Security* (Summer 1999).

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of the Cold War, relations between the United States and its allies will loosen and move toward a more traditional balance of power model. With the end of bipolarity, "the United States as the strongest power will often find other states edging away from it: Germany moving toward Eastern Europe and Russia, and Russia moving toward Germany and Japan."[4] According to this view, unipolarity is simply not stable. Eventually, the anarchic character of international politics will reassert itself: economic rivalry, security dilemmas, alliance decay and balance of power politics among the major states.

The driving forces of this expected global reaction are the everyday frustrations and worries that are produced by sharp power disparities. Because of the size of the United States, little shifts in U.S. policy can have huge consequences for other states. The Europeans will slowly expand their investments in autonomous military capabilities and increasingly articulate an independent strategic vision. Japan will expand its diplomatic engagement of East Asia, quietly launching independent security dialogues with other states in the region. At the same time, there is little in America's environment to discipline the exercise of Washington's power. It is hard for the world to ignore or work around the United States regardless of the issue—trade, finance, security, proliferation or the environment.

But while the world worries about what America does next—or neglects to do—the United States needs to worry very little about what the rest of the world does. In such a benign and unchallenged environment, U.S. foreign policy tends to be driven by domestic politics or the current policy tastes of its leaders. The sad fact is that in a world of unipolar power Americans need to know very little about what other governments or peoples think, but foreigners must worry increasingly about the vagaries of congressional campaigns and the idiosyncratic prejudices of congressional committee chairmen.

For those who see this world as inherently unstable, the existing world order will change not in large, dramatic leaps but in small steps. The great powers in Europe and Asia will begin making minute adjustments to protect themselves from the uncertainties of American power. Even in more balanced times, secondary states have worried about the ability of the United States simultaneously to restrain and commit itself. As the power imbalance has grown more extreme, America's willingness and ability to show restraint and make commitments is increasingly thrown into question. One can only imagine the discussions that go on, for example, in diplomatic cables between Paris and Berlin. Paris has never wanted to be a "junior partner in the American project", as one French official recently observed. Worried states are making small adjustments, creating alternatives to alliance with the United States. These small steps may not look important today, but eventually the ground will shift and the U.S.-led postwar order will fragment and disappear.

The Acceptable Face of American Power

THIS BLEAK vision of backlash and strategic rivalry is not destiny. Indeed, the most striking fact of international life in the decade since the end of the Cold War is that stable and cooperative relations

[3]For views along these lines, see Peter W. Rodman, "The World's Resentment: Anti-Americanism as a Global Phenomenon", *The National Interest* (Summer 2000); and Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower", *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1999).

[4]Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", *International Security* (Fall 1993), p. 75.

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between the democratic great powers continue largely unabated. In some ways these relations have actually deepened, such as with the creation of the World Trade Organization and the expansion of intergovernmental working groups under the auspices of the G-7. One reason for this is simple enough: There is a broad convergence of interests among the advanced industrial countries, all of which share deeply held common commitments to economic openness, democracy and multilateral management of global issues. The huge start-up costs of establishing an alternative to the U.S.-centered system also probably deter the other major states.

A critical ingredient in stabilizing international relations in a world of radical power disparities is the character of America itself. The United States is indeed a global hegemon, but because of its democratic institutions and political traditions it is—or can be—a relatively benign one. Joseph Nye's arguments on "soft power" of course come to mind here, and there is much to his point. But, in fact, there are other, more significant aspects of the American way in foreign policy that protect the United States from the consequences of its own greatness.

When other major states consider whether to work with the United States or resist it, the fact that it is an open, stable democracy matters. The outside world can see American policymaking at work and can even find opportunities to enter the process and help shape how the overall order operates. Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow, Tokyo and even Beijing—in each of these capitals officials can readily find reasons to conclude that an engagement policy toward the United States will be more effective than balancing against U.S. power.

America in large part stumbled into this open, institutionalized order in the 1940s, as it sought to rebuild the postwar world and to counter Soviet communism. In the late 1940s, in a pre-echo of today's situation, the United States was the world's dominant state—constituting 45 percent of world GNP, leading in military power, technology, finance and industry, and brimming with natural resources. But America nonetheless found itself building world order around stable and binding partnerships. Its calling card was its offer of Cold War security protection. But the intensity of political and economic cooperation between the United States and its partners went well beyond what was necessary to counter the Soviet threat. As the historian Geir Lundestad has observed, the expanding American political order in the half century after World War II was in important respects an "empire by invitation."[5] The remarkable global reach of American postwar hegemony has been at least in part driven by the efforts of European and Asian governments to harness U.S. power, render that power more predictable, and use it to overcome their own regional insecurities. The result has been a vast system of America-centered economic and security partnerships.

Even though the United States looks like a wayward power to many around the world today, it nonetheless has an unusual ability to co-opt and reassure. Three elements matter most in making U.S. power more stable, engaged and restrained.

First, America's mature political institutions organized around the rule of law have made it a relatively predictable and cooperative hegemon. The pluralistic and regularized way in which U.S. foreign and security policy is made reduces surprises and allows other states to build long-term, mutually beneficial relations. The governmental separation of powers cre-

[5]See Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952", *The Journal of Peace Research* (September 1986).

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ates a shared decision-making system that opens up the process and reduces the ability of any one leader to make abrupt or aggressive moves toward other states. An active press and competitive party system also provide a service to outside states by generating information about U.S. policy and determining its seriousness of purpose. The messiness of a democracy can, indeed, frustrate American diplomats and confuse foreign observers. But over the long term, democratic institutions produce more consistent and credible policies—policies that do not reflect the capricious and idiosyncratic whims of an autocrat.

Think of the United States as a giant corporation that seeks foreign investors. It is more likely to attract investors if it can demonstrate that it operates according to accepted accounting and fiduciary principles. The rule of law and the institutions of policymaking in a democracy are the political equivalent of corporate transparency and accountability. Sharp shifts in policy must ultimately be vetted within the policy process and pass muster by an array of investigatory and decision-making bodies. Because it is a constitutional, rule-based democracy, outside states are more willing to work with the United States—or, to return to the corporate metaphor, to invest in ongoing partnerships.

This open and decentralized political process works in a second way to reduce foreign worries about American power. It creates what might be called "voice opportunities"—that is, opportunities for political access and, with it, the means for foreign governments and groups to influence the way Washington's power is exercised. In 1990 the political analyst Pat Choate wrote a bestseller entitled *Agents of Influence*, detailing the supposedly scandalous ways in which Japanese ministries and corporations were manipulating the American political process. High-priced lobbyists were advancing Tokyo's commercial interests within the hallowed halls of the American capital and undermining the pursuit of the U.S. national interest. Today Washington is even more inundated by foreign diplomats and revolving-door lobbyists working to ensure that the interests of America's partners are not overlooked. Looked at from the perspective of the stable functioning of America's hegemonic order, Choate was actually describing one of the brilliant aspects of the United States as a global power. By providing other states opportunities to play the game in Washington, they are drawn into active, ongoing partnerships that serve the long-term strategic interests of the United States.

A third and final element of the American order that reduces worry about power asymmetries is the web of multilateral institutions that mark the postwar world. After World War II, the United States launched history's most ambitious era of institution-building. The UN, IMF, World Bank, NATO, GATT and other institutions that emerged provided a more extensive rule-based structure for political and economic relations than anything seen before. The United States had been deeply ambivalent about making permanent security commitments to other states and about allowing its political and economic policies to be dictated by intergovernmental bodies. The Soviet menace was critical in overcoming these doubts. Networks and political relationships were built that—paradoxically—made U.S. power both more far-reaching and durable but also more predictable and malleable.

In effect, the United States spun a web of institutions that connected other states to an emerging American-dominated economic and security order. But in doing so, these institutions also bound the United States to other states and reduced—at least to some extent—Washington's ability to engage in the arbitrary and indiscriminate exercise of

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power. Call it an institutional bargain. The price for the United States was a reduction in Washington's policy autonomy, in that institutional rules and joint decision-making reduced U.S. unilateralist capacities. But what Washington got in return was worth the price. America's partners also had their autonomy constrained, but in return were able to operate in a world where U.S. power was more restrained and reliable.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk spelled out the terms of the bargain in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1965:

> We are every day, in one sense, accepting limitations upon our complete freedom of action. . . . We have more than 4,300 treaties and international agreements, two-thirds of which have been entered into in the past 25 years. . . . Each one of which at least limits our freedom of action. We exercise our sovereignty going into these agreements.

But Rusk argued that these agreements also create a more stable environment within which the United States can pursue its interests. "Law is a process by which we increase our range of freedom" and "we are constantly enlarging our freedom by being able to predict what others are going to do."[6] The United States gets a more predictable environment and more willing partners.

There have been many moments when Asian and European allies have complained about the heavy-handedness of U.S. foreign policy, but the open and institutionalized character of the American order has minimized the possibilities of hegemonic excess over the long term. The untoward implications of sharp power asymmetries are reduced, cooperation and reciprocity are regularized, and the overall hegemonic order is rendered more legitimate and stable. The bargain—on both sides—remains intact.

Renewing the Institutional Bargain

AMERICA's soaring power in the 1990s has put this open and rule-based postwar order to the test. Over the last fifty years, the advanced industrial states have been relatively confident that the institutional foundations of this order would guard against the worst abuses of U.S. unilateralism and domination. The system had characteristics of a stakeholder hegemony that promoted stability and cooperation. Today, in various political circles around the world, it is harder for some people to make this judgment. Even the leader of a major U.S. ally, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, has raised concerns. "That there is a danger of unilateralism, not by just anybody but by the United States, is undeniable."[7]

The implication of my argument is that the more America's brute power capabilities emerge from behind mutually acceptable rules and institutions, the more that power will provoke reaction and resistance. American leaders are indeed ambivalent about entangling the country in restraints and commitments. In the past, however, these leaders have consistently concluded that some restraint on U.S. autonomy was a useful way to allay the worries of other states and bind them to America's postwar global political-economic order. As Robert Zoellick, former undersecretary of state and now U.S. Trade Representative in the Bush administration, describes the operation of this postwar order:

> The more powerful participants in this system—especially the United States—did

[6]Quoted in Edward C. Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organization, 1919-1999* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 61.

[7]Craig Whitney, *New York Times*, February 15, 1999.

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not forswear all their advantages, but neither did they exercise their strength without substantial restraint. Because the United States believed the Trilateral system was in its interest, it sacrificed some degree of national autonomy to promote it.[8]

What can America do to prevent the unraveling of this order? Three suggestions are offered here. First, U.S. officials should keep the country's current good fortunes in historical perspective. This might induce a bit more modesty. America's long-time rival from outside the advanced democratic world—Russia—now has an economy about the size of Denmark's. America's one-time rival from within the advanced democratic world—Japan—has gone through ten years of economic stagnation, with no end in sight. China is still a developing country in terms of both economic and military capabilities, far from being able to challenge the United States in either arena. Western Europe is stable and expanding, but it is consumed with its own union, embarked on a politically difficult economic restructuring, and still is not capable of projecting global power. This unusual—perhaps unique—set of circumstances gives the United States a *de facto* license to act as the world's manager and CEO. But U.S. officials should remember that the wheel of world power does turn. Russia will not be down forever, nor will Japan. Europe will eventually get its house in order. The way America treats the other major states when they are in decline will influence how these states treat America when—not if—they recover.

Second, the United States needs to renew the postwar institutional bargain by making it more explicit and more encompassing. This means that America must make it clear that it will play by multilateral rules in exchange for cooperation by other states on issues that matter most to us. The U.S. government should bury once and for all legislation such as Super 301 and the Helms-Burton Act, which give the president authority to act unilaterally to protect narrow economic interests. Such exercises of U.S. power create more problems than they solve. The United States should also expand its capacity to consult with other governments throughout the policymaking process. Washington is not just the capital of the country or even of "the West"; it is also—at least for a few more decades—the capital of a larger global order. These foreign stakeholders must be brought more fully into our policy process. Increasing opportunities to voice opinions can be achieved informally in the day to day willingness of U.S. officials to consult with other governments. If not, Washington risks an ultimate shift toward some other form of global order.

President George W. Bush seemed to acknowledge the dangers of an overweening foreign policy—and chest thumping about America as the "indispensable nation"—during one of the presidential debates, when he called for more modesty as America operates around the world. The Bush team has also made "listening to our allies" a central theme of its foreign policy. Whether this is more than hollow campaign rhetoric will depend on how the new administration acts on such issues as U.S. participation in peacekeeping operations, national missile defense, and a variety of proposed multilateral political and environmental accords.

Preserving the existing system through the redoubling of rule-based relationships will also require American elites to elevate the domestic debate on

[8]Zoellick, "The United States", in Zoellick et al., *21st Century Strategies of the Trilateral Countries: In Concert or Conflict?*, Report No. 53 (New York: Trilateral Commission, 1999), p. 5.

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international commitments and institutions. The old canard that building international rules and authority threatens American sovereignty is still too tempting to many politicians on the Left and Right. The argument that many—if not most—of the existing multilateral institutions are inspired by U.S. leadership and advance the country's goals needs to be made more convincing to the American people. Politicians are more likely to stress the short-term costs to the United States in terms of lost policy autonomy or sovereignty than the gains in building an enlightened order that serve long-term U.S. interests.

Finally, the United States needs to find more ways to pursue its economic and security goals through joint or multilateral decision-making exercises. A good example of such intergovernmental processes that create stakeholder cooperation is the 1999 Perry commission on North Korea. Responding to a congressional request for a reassessment of U.S. policy toward North Korea, the Clinton administration charged former Secretary of Defense William Perry with the task of policy review. The deliberations eventually involved extensive talks with Japan and South Korea. In a *de facto* way, the commission became multilateral, and Japanese and South Korean officials were integrated into the process and ultimately helped shape its content. The Perry report helped clarify U.S. policy toward North Korea, but the process by which it was generated also helped build consensus in the region on how to deal with that state. It also made American involvement in the region more consistent with the goals of partner states. The G-8 process—which in recent years has launched ongoing intergovernmental working groups to pursue common approaches to issues such as transnational organized crime and environmental policy—is also a place where coordinated policymaking can be expanded.

America's unipolar moment need not end in antagonistic disarray. But the United States needs to rediscover the solutions that it has brought to the problem of unequal power in the past. These solutions are celebrated in our national political tradition. The rule of law, constitutional principles and inclusive institutions of political participation ensure that governance is not simply a product of wealth or power. The wealthy and the powerful must operate within principled institutional parameters. Because a rule-based order generates more stable and cooperative relations within the country, even the wealthy and powerful gain by avoiding social upheaval, which puts everyone's interests at risk. America can once again take this old domestic insight and use it to shape post-Cold War international relations. And it is time to do so now, when America's relative power may be at its peak. □

Clarity at Last?

Are we all clear that we want to build something that can aspire to be a world power? In other words, not just a trading bloc but a political entity. Do we realize that our nation-states, taken individually, would find it far more difficult to assert their existence and their identity on the world stage?

—Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission, *Financial Times*, February 14, 2001

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Blair's "Ethical" Policy

Robin Harris

BRITISH Prime Minister Tony Blair and his foreign secretary, Robin Cook, were all the quicker to congratulate George W. Bush on confirmation of his election because they knew that they had a good deal of ground to make up. For months Labour Party figures had scarcely concealed their scorn for the Republican presidential candidate. Blair's *éminence grise*, Peter Mandelson, then Northern Ireland secretary, was even indiscrete enough to tell journalists his opinions of Bush and his policies at a drinks party before Christmas, and then had to issue a public retraction.

If the problem were simply the result of New Labour nostalgia for the cozy relationship built up with the Clinton administration, it would have little long-term significance. But its roots go much deeper than that and lie not in personalities but in policies, indeed in conceptions of the very purpose of Western foreign and security policy. Even on the occasion of Messrs. Blair's and Cook's formal felicitations, their words, consciously or not, contained more than a hint of trouble to come. "President-elect Bush", said Blair, "is a man who shares our values [and] wants *Europe and America to stand side by side*." Still more significant, Cook looked forward to working with the new President and to "keeping Britain as that *unique bridge between America and Europe*" [emphasis added].

Policymakers in Washington ought to study and reflect on these apparently anodyne phrases and the attitudes that lie behind them. They need to ask themselves whether America really wants Europe to stand at its side rather than to stand behind its leadership. And they should consider and then articulate whether they expect Britain to be a "bridge" ("unique" or otherwise), or whether they prefer the traditional British role of highly effective and strongly committed ally. These questions, which the Clinton administration was happy to fudge, and the Blair government even more so, will sooner rather than later have to be resolved.

Pivots and Policies

TONY BLAIR has a sense of the historic, if not exactly of history. He wants, as his friend Bill Clinton ever more desperately wanted, to be seen by posterity as having shaped events and bestrode them. In a November 1999 speech at the Lord Mayor of London's banquet, the traditional annual

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occasion for a British prime minister to review foreign policy, Blair thus expansively reflected upon the legacy of empire. Successive generations of British politicians from Churchill to Thatcher had, he said, tried and failed to find for Britain a satisfactory post-imperial role. He continued:

> However, I believe that search can now end. We have got over our Imperial past, and the withdrawal symptoms. No longer do we want to be taken seriously just for our history, but for what we are and what we will become. We have a new role. . . . It is to use the strengths of our history to build our future not as a superpower but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world and its future.

This was vintage Blair. The passage has a self-confident, even visionary assertiveness that smacks of Margaret Thatcher. At the same time, it reassures the liberal media with its appeal to modernity and internationalism. And, equally typical, it contains at its core an embarrassing intellectual vacuum.

"Pivots" are, of course, in fashion. Paul Kennedy, for example, has argued that a "pivotal states strategy" should be at the heart of a realistic American approach to foreign and security policy.[1] But Kennedy's category of pivotal states was not one within which any British prime minister would greatly wish to see his country slotted. Such states are "pivotal" precisely because—like Mexico, Algeria or Egypt—they face a precarious future, and because that future matters to the West as a whole. Clearly, Blair was not talking about that kind of pivot.

In truth, it is difficult to envisage why any state or any individual would voluntarily act as a pivot. Pivots have no life of their own. They are necessarily rigid and static. Their value is simply as a means of permitting movement by others.

This objection is not just pedantry. Such metaphors drawn from engineering for use in political discourse—like engines, power houses, gear changes—always belie a confusion of ends with means. Blair sees that Britain is a nuclear-armed state and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, that it has close relations with America, that it is a leading power in Europe, that it has links with Africa and Asia through the Commonwealth, and that it enjoys the advantage of English being the language of international business. But he confuses the possession of these undoubted geopolitical strengths with possession of a policy to apply them. Does Britain, in fact, currently have such a policy?

Out of Africa

ODDLY enough, the beginnings of the answer may be found in a downtrodden, poverty-stricken, blood-drenched corner of West Africa. Blair may pride himself on exorcising the demons of empire, but his government's approach to Sierra Leone strongly suggests the opposite.

> Take up the White Man's burden—
> The savage wars of peace—
> Fill full the mouth of Famine
> And bid the sickness cease;
> And when your goal is nearest
> The end for others sought,
> Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
> Bring all your hope to nought.

Kipling's lament is particularly appropriate to Sierra Leone. The settlement of Freetown was created by the British in 1787 for slaves repatriated from Britain and the United States, and for others liberated from the slave ships. It grew over

[1]Kennedy et al., "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy", *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1996).

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time into a small, prosperous and well-educated colony. But since independence in 1961 it has slipped from dictatorship to kleptocracy and from kleptocracy to anarchy. It is as pointless to apply Western-style labels to the individuals and factions concerned as it was to those in the old Soviet Union—which, however, has not prevented the British Foreign Office from doing so.

In truth, the one common factor in the tangled events of Sierra Leone's recent history is that British politicians and diplomats have managed to be wrong at every stage. The political struggles in Sierra Leone and in neighboring Liberia are mainly about control of the diamond business. Belatedly realizing this, Britain has persuaded the UN to take measures to outlaw "conflict diamonds." But, of course, the mere act of outlawing something, without any prospect of enforcement, will not work in Sierra Leone any more than it has in Angola, where civil strife rages unabated. Greed always finds a way.

And the story of Sierra Leone is one of greed on an epic scale. In 1991 Foday Sankoh, a former army corporal, teamed up with Charles Taylor, then a militia leader and now Liberia's president, to overthrow the government of Sierra Leone and seize the diamond mines. But before they could finish the job, a military coup brought a baby-faced young captain, Valentine Strasser, to power. Strasser was initially much feted by the West as a "reformer"—until he damaged his international reputation by having twenty-six of his opponents taken out to the beach at Freetown and summarily executed. Britain suspended aid, but later provided Strasser with a refuge when he was ousted in 1996: he is now drawing social security benefits and living in a modest house in north London.

Amid much international rejoicing, democracy was re-introduced. Elections brought to power President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. But it was South African mercenaries who kept him there. Unfortunately, white mercenaries—the traditional prop for black African governments—are frowned upon in the global village. So the mercenaries were sent home and the government promptly fell, overturned in another military coup.

At this point, the Labour government took office in Britain and Robin Cook entered the imposing portals of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Cook resolved to flex his muscles. He decided that "democracy" must be "restored" in Sierra Leone. But how? The foreign secretary's first error was to will the ends without being realistic about the means. While pretending that Britain was adhering to an internationally agreed arms embargo, the Foreign Office secretly supported a mercenary effort to overthrow the military regime. That regime was indeed ousted in February 1998. Nigerian troops were sent in, but Freetown was extensively looted in the fighting.

The leader of the rebels, Sankoh, was now captured by the Nigerians. He had one of the worst reputations for human rights abuses in Africa. His forces' specialty was mutilation, as the piteous photographs of limbless women and children begging in Freetown testify. Sankoh was sentenced to death *in absentia* by a Sierra Leonean court. But the foreign secretary now intervened. Cook, not known for his tolerance of crimes when allegedly committed by white-skinned former Chilean heads of state, pressed President Kabbah to pardon Sankoh and to grant him immunity. The foreign secretary also persuaded Kabbah to appoint Sankoh as his vice president and minister for natural resources—which afforded the latter's men control over the diamonds for which the whole struggle had taken place. This was Cook's second, and egregious, error. Naturally enough, Sankoh and his men exploited the new opportunity to the max-

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imum, and ignored all previous undertakings of good behavior.

Cook's third mistake was his decision to commit substantial numbers of British troops to support the Sierra Leonean government against Sankoh's now fully reactivated forces, without hard-headed assessment of the mission's purpose. The stated objectives were initially the sensible, limited ones of liberating kidnapped UN soldiers and affording protection to British nationals. But there was no doubting that the mission had a much wider and more ambitious long-term goal—the establishment of democratic order. The triumphalism with which the operation was announced confirmed as much: "Britain will not abandon its commitment to Sierra Leone", proclaimed Cook.

The immediate outcome was encouraging. Given the professionalism and firepower of the force committed, that was hardly surprising. The UN soldiers were released. Sankoh was captured—again. But Cook seriously misjudged British public opinion, which was now alarmed about the risk of British troops becoming sucked into an unwinnable war in an impossible country for inexplicable ends. Accordingly, the 800 paratroopers were withdrawn and a much more modest force of Marines took over with a mandate to train and arm the Sierra Leonean army.

This, though, compounded the mistake. Too small a force had been sent to perform too large a mission. The factions involved in the Sierra Leonean civil war were actually already quite well trained, both in killing each other and civilians. They were also well armed. In any case, Britain could exercise little control over the weapons sent. Some, to Cook's embarrassment, were used by child soldiers fighting for the Sierra Leonean government. Others fell into the hands of the rebels. Indeed, it was increasingly hard to decide who the "rebels" were, given the chaotic shifting of allegiances. The "West Side Boys" who captured eleven British soldiers and held them hostage had actually started out on the side of the government. The subsequent rescue by British troops of their comrades in a prolonged and bloody battle was a difficult mission well accomplished. But where did it all leave Sierra Leone?

As an exercise in futility, the whole operation increasingly resembled the disastrous U.S./UN mission in Somalia in 1993. The conclusion should have been the same. Again, Kipling:

> Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should,
> We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good.

But will it? Almost certainly not. As the UN force in Sierra Leone crumbles—amid mutual recriminations and withdrawals—Britain continues to increase its commitment. A British officer is now chief of staff; major amphibious exercises are planned; a naval task force has been sent. In the eyes of the British government, if in no one else's, the business is not just deadly but deadly serious. And, indeed, once you take away the braggadocio and misjudgments, you are left with something resembling a doctrine to which both Blair and Cook are committed.

Ethics and Interests

THIS, it should be said, is not a doctrine specifically relating to Africa. It is not, for example, at all equivalent to the traditional French approach to the francophone countries of that continent. French strategy consists of a more or less unashamed pursuit of national interest, aimed principally at resisting and undermining American and British influence. Ever since the revelations about France's role

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in the Hutu genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda, Paris has trodden more lightly; but its footprints are still apparent, and their direction is clear.

By contrast, Britain's attitude is naive rather than self-serving. Until the late January re-shuffle caused by Mandelson's resignation, the Foreign Office minister with responsibility for Africa was Peter Hain. Hain still entertains the same romantic illusions about the black man's liberation struggle as he did when he was a young activist agitating against South African rugby tours. It is just that, as with other members of that political generation, hi-tech globalist rhetoric has been larded into the old prejudices. Thus Hain could recently be heard forecasting a bright future for Africa because of

> exciting new technologies. Somali pastoralists using mobile phones to price the cost of goats in Jeddah, allowing them to operate in the wider world outside the confines of inefficient state-owned fixed line systems, is a graphic illustration of the possibilities.[2]

It is difficult to imagine Hain's French equivalent preoccupied with the sale of Saudi goats. There is, indeed, more than a trace of farce about British foreign policy today. Some of this is simply a reflection of Robin Cook himself, not least his bombast. In opposition, Cook's rhetorical flourishes across the dispatch box of the House of Commons were admired. But in office, when a measure of authoritative sobriety is expected, his grandiloquence threatens to turn him into a buffoon. Who else in British politics could say the following:

> Since I took office in 1997, Madeleine [Albright] and I have worked closely together on tackling some of the biggest foreign policy problems of our age.[3]
>
> I come to America as the President of a European Union going through immense and exciting change.[4]
>
> Britain will not turn its back on Sierra Leone. Today I will go there.[5]
>
> There is no greater national duty than the defence of our shoreline. But the most immediate threat to it today is the encroaching sea.[6]

Yet, for all that, Cook is the spokesman for a serious—if also seriously flawed—doctrine of liberal internationalism. The Foreign Office "mission statement" still claims that it exists to serve the national interest. But it then goes on to elaborate that interest in terms so nebulous that the expression is drained of meaning. Nor is this at all surprising, for, according to Cook, "the global interest is becoming the national interest." Thus in one trite slogan some four centuries of debating, calculating and executing policies designed to maintain Britain's standing and promote Britain's interests in the world are abandoned. The Victorians generally assumed that what was in Britain's interest must also be in the world's interest. The Labour government now assumes the precise opposite, that what is in the global interest must be in Britain's. Each proposition is as unthinking as the other, though at least the Victorians had no illusion that their view commanded universal assent. Today the high priests of globalism have simply decreed that distinctions, priorities and choices in foreign and security policy are outdated relics of old thinking. And all that therefore remains is to resolve the

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[2]Speech by Hain at the Challenges for Governance in Africa Conference, Wilton Park, July 24, 2000.

[3]Speech by Cook to the American Bar Association, London, July 19, 2000.

[4]Speech by Cook to the European Institute, Washington, DC, January 15, 1998.

[5]Cook, *The Scotsman*, July 7, 2000.

[6]Speech by Cook to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, January 28, 2000.

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Manichaean conflict between (in Blair's words) "the forces of progress and the forces of conservatism."

In this make-believe world, where the forces of progress are always identifiable and by definition correct, there is no room for moral ambiguity. We know what is right—the international community tells us so—and there is no excuse for shirking. And so it was, in Cook's words, that the "ethical foreign policy" was born.[7] The pursuit of this approach has, however, provided the government with so many headaches, and its critics with so much ammunition, that the phrase has now been banned. The Labour Party's draft manifesto will, it is reported, omit it entirely. It is easy to understand why.

The government has behaved, as governments will, according to double standards, and it has frequently been caught out. The British Left has always railed against the arms trade, refusing to accept that it is not the possession of arms but the intentions of the possessors that matter. So Cook declared it an ethical aim to "curb the supply of weapons that fuel conflict." The policy was soon exposed. Hawk military aircraft were supplied to Indonesia right up to the time of the first large-scale atrocities in East Timor. Still worse, Cook found himself pressured by Downing Street into allowing the export of spare parts for Hawks supplied to Zimbabwe, which is deeply engaged in the bloody civil war in the Congo.

Similarly, Cook began by promising to "put human rights at the heart of our policy." But weak, vulnerable countries proved a good deal more likely to experience Cook's condemnation than great powers—just as was the case with Jimmy Carter's reign. Here China was the test case. The foreign secretary reversed the previous British position adopted in the UN Human Rights Commission by refusing to back a resolution condemning China's abuses. When Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Britain in 1999, protestors with the temerity to remind him of Chinese brutalities in Tibet were kept out of sight and their banners confiscated. When the Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng sought a meeting with Cook, it was first refused and then, when it did occur, the foreign secretary's office ensured that the two were not photographed together, for fear of Beijing's reaction. When Lee Teng-hui, the former president of Taiwan, sought a visa in order to visit his granddaughter, it was only granted on condition that he say nothing embarrassing during his stay. All of these positions were adopted in response to Chinese pressure. Under Messrs. Blair and Cook, Britain has become a virtuoso of the kowtow.

Do such double standards matter? Arguably not. Contrary to Cook's confident assertions, global relationships are still governed by interplays of power. The arms business has to go on if its employees are to be paid. And great powers with unpleasant regimes must sometimes be shown respect or they will take umbrage and may retaliate. The problem with hypocrisy on the scale practiced by the British Foreign Office today, however, is that it makes Britain a laughing stock. And on any definition of the national interest that should matter.

Doctrinaire Interventionism

IT CERTAINLY matters to Tony Blair, whose preoccupations, if not his policies, are somewhat different from those of Cook. Both Blair and Cook were once men of the Left. For

[7]In fact, Cook only spoke originally of an "ethical dimension", but there was no attempt to limit its significance until the embarrassments began to surface. Speech by Cook at the launch of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office mission statement, London, May 12, 1997.

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example, they supported the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the body that pressed for unilateral Western abandonment of the nuclear deterrent throughout the crucial stages of the Cold War. (Hain, who has been representing Britain in nuclear non-proliferation talks, is still a CND member.) Yet Blair could never have been heard telling a Labour Party Conference, as Cook did in 1982, "I come to this rostrum to beg Conference, to ask Conference, to plead with Conference to vote for unilateral nuclear disarmament." As a young politician Blair was always too pragmatic and ambitious to get into such scrapes. Now as prime minister both his pragmatism and his ambition—and increasingly his pride—incline him toward a more robust posture than could ever be welcome to the sinuous officialdom of the Foreign Office. Hence Britain's role in the Kosovo operation.

Both the Bush (Senior) administration in America and the Major government in Britain seriously mishandled the crises that followed the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The resolve shown in dealing with Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War was noticeably lacking in dealing with Slobodan Milosevic in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. For the European Left, however, the lessons went well beyond arguments about wider or narrower views of national interest and about the expeditious use of overwhelming force. Balkan genocide was, rather, according to its analysis, a manifestation of the failure of the international community to defend a liberal, multicultural model against the forces of nationalism. Kosovo thus provided at once an opportunity to impose the values of a new liberal order and a prominent occasion to demonstrate international clout. The combination was hard for Blair to resist.

Accordingly, Britain was at the forefront of the Kosovo campaign at both its inception and its conclusion, when British troops raced the Russians to Pristina. The campaign itself was botched, though this was largely the result of rules of engagement dictated by Washington. Partly because of these constraints, the Serbs were given the opportunity to drive out much of the Albanian population. Since then, in retaliation, the Albanians on their return have ethnically cleansed the Serbs, over half of whom have now departed. According to Madeleine Albright, "We all want a multi-ethnic Kosovo." But evidently "we" excludes the majority of Kosovars—and nothing that the new government in Belgrade does is going to change that one whit. Kosovo thus hangs in a kind of limbo, between independence and rejoining the rump Yugoslavia; a poor, corrupt, misgoverned colony administered by reluctant imperialists.

It is difficult to imagine that the experience of Western involvement in Kosovo would have provided much inspiration for New Labour's global interventionists. But it has. Blair's hubristic belief in his ability to rework the patterns of the past and impose modern liberal shapes and sizes now knows no bounds. Speaking in Zagreb last November, for example, he offered "the chance of a new history for the [Balkan] region."

Above all, the Kosovo affair prompted Blair to make a speech in Chicago that encapsulates the ambitions of his government's foreign policy. Arguing that the Kosovo campaign was "a just war . . . based on values", the Prime Minister put forward what he called "a new doctrine of international community." This was required, he said, because "we are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not." Most important, "we cannot turn our backs on conflicts and the violation of human rights within other countries if we want still to be secure."

Of course, a moment's reflection reveals this to be nonsense. In most cases,

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human rights abuses in other countries have no practical impact on us whatsoever. Perhaps it is true that "no man is an island", but states are at best morally peninsular. Yet with Blair's pronouncements it is not intellectual substance, or the lack of it, that counts, but rather what his aides refer to as "the signals." In this case, Blair was signaling that Britain is now wholeheartedly committed to a program of ubiquitous international interventionism.

What is less clear is precisely how this bold, vast, novel project is to be accomplished. After all, Britain cannot undertake it alone; it cannot lead it; and there are even doubts about how much it can contribute to it, at least in direct security terms. British defenses have been run down since the Cold War, like those of most other Western countries, largely to pay higher welfare bills. The British Army has been cut by about a third. The chief of the defence staff has recently warned that it will not be fully manned for another five years, because of reduced career prospects and upheavals resulting from constantly changing deployments. And Britain's forces are already suffering from a serious case of overstretch. There are over 20,000 servicemen in Germany, about 3,000 in Bosnia, over 5,000 in Kosovo, more than 3,000 in Cyprus, and a growing number in Sierra Leone. Moreover, it is far from clear that the United Kingdom's number one domestic trouble spot, Ulster—where almost 14,000 are currently deployed—will remain conveniently untroubled while Britain minds other peoples' business.

Equally important, Britain simply no longer has the military technology to act effectively as a world policeman. Compared with America, it is no more than special constable at best. This was embarrassingly demonstrated in the Kosovo campaign, when none of the European air forces could operate effectively without U.S. support, and not very effectively even then. The trend will inevitably accelerate with advances in the use of networked information and precision weaponry—the "revolution in military affairs."

One solution to this problem would be to leave the real business of military interventions to the Americans, with the British and others confining themselves to subordinate tasks. But that runs up against U.S. reluctance—a reluctance that will certainly be more evident as Secretary of State Colin Powell makes his mark. In any case, that kind of U.S.-led globalism would look rather too similar to Western imperialism to be acceptable to the New Left in Europe. Realizing this, Tony Blair's Britain has instead become a vociferous champion of the proposals contained in the recent report to the UN secretary-general for a much larger direct military role for the UN. That was the message that Blair brought to the UN Millennium Summit, when he called for implementation of the report "within a twelve month timescale." Britain has also offered to act as host country for a permanent staff college for peacekeepers.

Just possibly, something may come of this. But it is in the realm of institutions rather than military operations that the consequences of Blair's "doctrine of international community" are most likely to manifest themselves. Here, too, the Balkans provide the peg.

The war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, set up in 1993 and 1994 respectively, were responses to Western apathy, impotence and (in the case of Rwanda) collusion in genocide. Neither has worked as intended. It was only when the perpetrators began to lose that the prospects for their apprehension and punishment increased—confirming that the only possible international justice always turns out to be victor's jus-

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tice. In fact, now that prosecutions are belatedly gathering pace, the most likely effect, especially in the Balkans, will be to make a return to order and reconciliation more difficult.

Undaunted, Britain has become one of the leading advocates of the creation of an all-embracing International Criminal Court (ICC) that would intrude far more comprehensively into the affairs of sovereign states. During the ICC negotiations, the British delegation consistently argued for the most radical options—for example, insisting that the definition of war crimes should include crimes committed in internal conflicts. As a sign of its commitment, Britain has also offered to imprison those convicted of crimes against humanity. Again, there is globalist theory at work here, and in its most extreme form. As Cook expressed it: "It is no longer sufficient for states to claim that they have the sovereign right to decide what is going to be legal and what is going to be illegal. *The international community can both determine and enforce that*" [emphasis added].[8]

The objections in principle to such an approach to international justice have been trenchantly and persuasively put by others.[9] But the main objection in practice, which weighed heavily with the United States under Clinton and will weigh more heavily still under President Bush, is the prospect of American politicians, high officials and military personnel being made internationally answerable for overseas interventions. This cuts no ice at all with Britain's Foreign Office. Yet on any common-sense view it should. Britain is not as feared as the United States, so its personnel are that much more vulnerable. At the same time, Britain is uniquely closely associated with America in operations that are anathema to many members of the international community. What the Argentineans would already like to do to Margaret Thatcher others will probably want to do to Tony Blair, and perhaps even Robin Cook.

The issue of the ICC has also exposed another fundamental weakness in the Blairite "doctrine of international community." This is that the latter's most important members sometimes sharply disagree. That does not so much bother Cook, who still appears to enjoy nothing more than the opportunity to cock a snook at the United States. But if America maintains its objections, it may yet come to bother Blair.

This is because the Prime Minister entered office deeply and rightly conscious of the importance of the Anglo-American relationship as the basis for his and his country's international standing. And in that he was greatly influenced by the career of his predecessor-but-one.

In Her Footsteps?

INDEED, Tony Blair has spent the last four years beset with something bordering on an obsession with Margaret Thatcher's premiership. He correctly judges that the influence that Britain wielded with the two superpowers and their leaders—Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev—in the 1980s allowed Thatcher to impose her views and values both at home and abroad. He wants to do the same.

Hence Blair's extraordinary and even undignified efforts to establish a friendship with Bill Clinton, a man whose moral standards and personal behavior

[8]Speech by Cook at a Center for Global Governance seminar, January 13, 2000.

[9]See, for example, John R. Bolton, "Courting Danger: What's Wrong With the International Criminal Court", *The National Interest* (Winter 1998/99); and David B. Rivkin, Jr., and Lee A. Casey, "The Rocky Shoals of International Law", *The National Interest* (Winter 2000/01).

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must surely jar with his own almost too good to be true uprightness of character. Hence also the still more bizarre campaign to ingratiate himself with Vladimir Putin. It was Clinton who described the Russian leader as "a man we can do business with", echoing Thatcher's often quoted comment about Gorbachev. But it was Blair who took the risk of flying off to endorse Putin even before his election victory, and at the same time indirectly endorsing the latter's brutal, indeed genocidal, campaign in Chechnya by describing it as a fight against "terrorism."

Blair was lucky with Clinton, whose survival of the impeachment process vindicated the British Prime Minister's support. By contrast, his luck appears to have run out with Putin, who ever since the initial plaudits and flattery has consistently lived down to all that should be expected of a not very talented KGB apparatchik. Blair has made repeated efforts to woo Russia. He has backed Moscow in its vociferous campaign against major revision or abandonment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty—another issue on which he will find himself sharply at odds with the new U.S. administration. He has turned a blind eye to the continued heavy-handed suppression of Russian media freedoms. He even tried to persuade the block-headed chiefs of the rusting Russian navy to accept his offer of help in rescuing their submariners, dying on the floor of the Barents Sea. But all to no avail. The prospects of Blair's friendship with "Vladimir" enhancing Britain's international standing sank with the Kursk.

The one crucial failure of British foreign policy in the Thatcher years was, Blair believes, in dealings with Europe. On taking office he therefore pledged to "end the isolation of the last twenty years and be a leading partner in Europe." One should not exaggerate the originality of this aspiration. It was shared by the Conservative government in 1979. It was still more deeply shared by John Major, who pledged in 1991 to put Britain at the "very heart of Europe." But with Tony Blair the project has become a veritable passion.

In its pursuit, he has continued to state his support for the principle of abolishing sterling in favor of the European single currency—even though the euro still looks sick and the British public remains deeply hostile. He has undergone humiliation within the ranks of the European Left, as his ideas of a "Third Way" between capitalism and socialism have been cold-shouldered by the other members of the club. Most significant of all, he has reversed Britain's previously hostile attitude toward the integration of the country's armed forces with those of the other European Union members outside the framework of NATO.

Whether Blair understood how the United States would see this radical about-turn in British security policy is perhaps doubtful. Certainly, a large measure of the blame must go to the Clinton administration, which failed properly to articulate the Pentagon's amply justified misgivings. But it was the Prime Minister's conviction that alternately massaging and intimidating the British media would prevent difficult questions being asked that finally misled him.

Blair's objective was quite simple, if also extremely cynical. He sought at one and the same time to magnify the importance of Britain's European defense commitment, thus pleasing his opposite numbers in France and Germany, while downplaying that same commitment in order to reassure opinion in Britain and America. Unfortunately, this stratagem was repeatedly derailed by unwelcome home truths blurted out by the Europeans. Thus European Commission President Romano Prodi confirmed that the planned European rapid reaction force was indeed a European army. As he

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told the *Independent* newspaper: "When I was talking about the European army I was not joking. If you don't want to call it a European army, don't call it a European army. You can call it 'Margaret', you can call it 'Mary-Ann', you can find any name."[10] The French, whose anti-Americanism has provided the driving force for the project, have also repeatedly emphasized that the rapid reaction force is to be the core of a European army and is intended to operate independently from NATO.

But what most preoccupies Blair is the effect that adverse reactions in Washington might have upon otherwise somnolent British public opinion. So in the run-up to the December 2000 European summit in Nice, at which the plans for the new force were due to be agreed upon, he took pre-emptive action. Ten Downing Street, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence launched a fierce campaign to deny that any American worries existed about the Euro-army and to portray British Euroskeptic newspapers as driven by blind prejudice in reporting the contrary. This campaign boomeranged spectacularly. It prompted a final and public break with Margaret Thatcher, the politician whose views on security matters were most likely to be taken seriously on the other side of the Atlantic; she denounced Blair's support for the European army as "an act of monumental folly" taken "to satisfy political vanity." It also prompted the outgoing U.S. defense secretary to issue what amounted to a correction and a rebuke. And it prompted U.S. opponents of the planned European force to speak out more clearly than ever before.

Blair's real problems do not, however, lie mainly with his domestic or even his foreign critics, but rather with the contradictions in the policy itself. He cannot indefinitely appear to adopt both Eurocentric and Atlanticist approaches. He has to choose.

One year after he had described his "pivotal" foreign policy at the Lord Mayor's banquet, the British Prime Minister returned to the same broad theme before the same distinguished audience. This time he called for, in terms that would be familiar to an American audience, "engagement, not isolation." Yet isolation from Britain's oldest and most important ally, the only global superpower, is precisely where Blair's foreign policy doctrine is ultimately bound to lead if it continues to be pursued. And this, of course, will only be the latest, if by far the most serious, in a by now lengthy list of foreign policy failures that have flowed from that same doctrine.

An Alternative Course

GOVERNMENTS must often, it is true, encounter failure in the pursuit of foreign policy. Failure does not necessarily mean that the policy itself was misconceived. Unpredictable and uncontrollable circumstances may simply have overtaken it. What is really dangerous for a nation, however, is when a government does not even know how to measure failure, for then failure risks becoming cumulative.

Blair's government continues to reinforce failure in Europe, as it does in its dealings with Africa, the Balkans and Russia. And unless there is a swift change of course, failure will characterize Britain's transatlantic relations, too. The British government re-inforces its failures for the same reason that it pursues an "ethical" foreign policy, enmeshed in unresolvable contradictions, and welcomes initiatives, like the International Criminal Court, that jeopardize British interests. It behaves in this fashion not merely because of Cook's incompetence or Blair's delusions, but

[10]Stephen Castle and Andrew Grice, *The Independent* (London), February 4, 2000.

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because it has abandoned the concept of national interest as the lodestar by which to plot its course.

Establishing just what that national interest requires at any time is intellectually demanding. Putting the conclusions into effect may be difficult, painful and sometimes dangerous. And beyond that, what the philosopher Michael Oakeshott says of politics in general is surely truer still of foreign policymaking in particular, that it is an activity in which

> men sail a boundless and bottomless sea; there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel; the sea is both friend and enemy; and the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behaviour in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion.[11]

But does New Labour, or the New Left anywhere, really have the stomach for that? □

[11]Oakeshott, "Political Education", in *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 127.

Let's Hope He's Right

The First World War is a mystery to two thirds of secondary schoolchildren and some think Adolf Hitler was Britain's prime minister in the Second World War.

Widespread confusion reigns over Henry VIII's wives, with more than a third of children thinking that he had eight instead of six, and nearly one in 10 children believed Victoria was on the throne during the Armada.

About a fifth believed that Oliver Cromwell was at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and six per cent think that he was around at the Battle of Britain in 1940. One per cent linked him to the Falklands war.

The level of ignorance was exposed by a survey published today of children between 11 and 18 taught history to at least the age of 14 under the national curriculum.

—*Daily Telegraph* (London), January 18, 2001

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There is an intelligent, sceptical England surviving under all the rubbish we see on television.

—*From Auberon Waugh's last column in the same newspaper*

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Their Gilded Age—and Ours

Fouad Ajami

OUR ATTENTION was bound to come around to the first age of capital, those years that stretched from Britain's repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 to the outbreak of the First World War. For once we had entered into a great controversy about the integration of global finance and markets in our time, that first global economy became a very usable past.

In a way, it came rather too easily. By a leap of faith, by imaginative historical analogies, the Internet became for us what the railroads were for that earlier age. Today's heady belief that commerce has tamed conquest and made wars unthinkable can also be located back in that era. So when the evangelists of globalization trumpeted the birth of Pax Kapital, the historically-minded, and particularly those most skeptical about the claimed novelty of our times, headed straight into the past, into that First Global Economy. There they saw the precursors of the present moment: transnational capital, mobility of labor, a global monetary authority attained through the functioning of the gold standard, and, most vivid of all, the titans of industry who loomed larger than princes and the rulers of states. They also saw rack and ruin and illusion. Then, too, nations thought they had tamed the beast—only to be overtaken by war, the destruction of markets, and the shredding of economic liberalism.

It was with this story that the influential and popular economist Paul Krugman launched his column in the *New York Times*. For his maiden voyage on January 2, 2000, the economist-turned-pundit chose to write of that First Global Economy. We have been here before, he warned, and the seemingly "unstoppable logic of growing trade and investment" could again be undone. "To some extent", Krugman wrote,

> The First Global Economy was a casualty of war. The Panama Canal and the Western Front both went into action in August 1914.... But the truth is that even before 1914, though the volume of trade and investment continued to expand, the globalist idea was on the defensive. Intelligent men might explain that wars were no longer worth fighting and borders obsolete; a sophisticated cosmopolitan elite ... might move freely between continents; but the political foundations for a global economy were never properly laid, and at the first serious shock the structure collapsed.

"I speak to my daughter-in-law so my neighbor can hear me", goes an Arab

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maxim. Which is to acknowledge that all these journeys into the past are, of course, meditations on our time, on our Second Global Economy, to use Krugman's term, and ruminations about our own fate. States smashed the liberal world in 1914, the "commanding heights" were claimed by political men, and the regulatory state emerged out of the wreckage of a global time of troubles. No age exactly repeats what has gone before, it must be granted right away. But increasingly we are writing our world, and reading it, into the way the First Global Economy was put together, and then came apart.

Raging, Tearing, Booming

OFTEN enough, we are reading that world through the lives of great men. In the age of Bill Gates, Steve Case and Warren Buffett (the "Oracle of Omaha"), it is natural to think of John D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan and the Rothschilds. Those giants of finance lorded over a global economy sustained by Pax Britannica, underpinned by the ideology of free trade, transnational in its sources and movement of capital. But even they could not prevent the ground from being pulled from underneath them as political support cracked and the liberalizing gains of six to seven decades were irretrievably lost. They are the characters that act out the plot.

The best portrait of the Gilded Age has been sketched for us by the historian and writer Jean Strouse in her magnificent biography, *Morgan: An American Financier.*[1] A biographer at once tireless and possessed of a delicate touch, Strouse has captured a seminal figure in American economic history against a rich and crowded and tumultuous background. Her work will stand as one of those books that do justice to a single, important life, but place the subject in a whole, big world. Now and then a life illuminates an age, and it was J.P. Morgan's luck and fate to come into his own as America itself was being remade.

Born in 1837, Morgan stepped into the family's merchant banking business to work with his father, Junius, at a time of great economic transformation. A single national economy was being created by railroads, and thousands of miles of track were being laid down. The U.S. population would double between 1870 and 1914, while the national wealth would increase fourfold. It was a time of rising per capita incomes, a roaring bull market, and a speculative fever in land and stocks. The dash for riches had begun in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. It was, as Ron Chernow put it in a rich biography, *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.*, a time of "outsize dreams. . . . A new cult of opportunity sprang up, producing a generation of business leaders for whom work was the greatest adventure life afforded." Money was in the air, and all sorts of possibilities danced about: "A perfect mania for patents and inventions swept America, as everybody tinkered with some new contrivance."[2] Men were through with the past, and with tradition. This was the world that Mark Twain—who gave us the term "the Gilded Age"—described as the "raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century."

The capital markets—domestic savings, and American securities sold in European markets—had a brand new world to finance and to invent. It was not merciful, that new world, and it was not ordered: it was propelled by buccaneer capitalism at full throttle, and the railroad business epitomized the chaos. There were unsupervised, good lines competing with lines laid down by speculators. From the outset of his remarkable career,

[1]Strouse, *Morgan: An American Financier* (New York: Random House, 1999).

[2]Chernow, *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.* (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 97-8.

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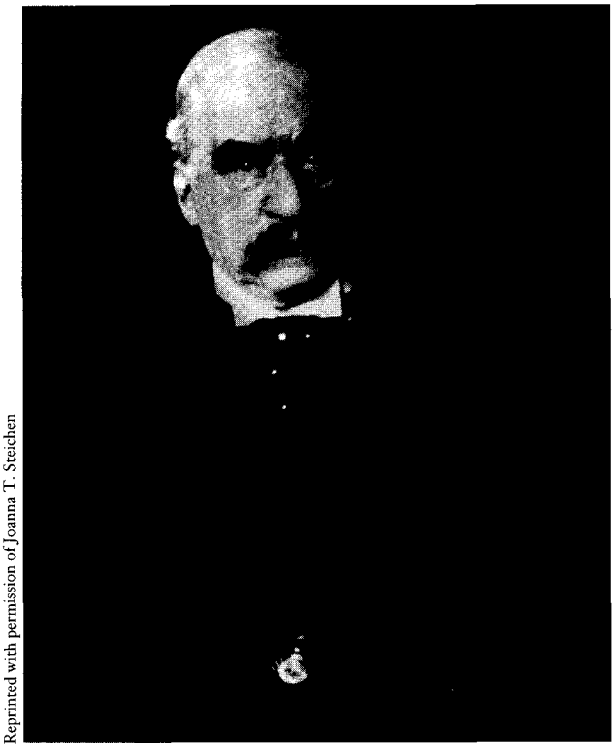
Morgan abhorred that kind of chaos. His instinct was for order. He was for "true" valuation. (The kind of valuation, disconnected from profits, that has—until recently—been driving the Internet market ever higher would have been anathema to him.)

Morgan's initiation into the world of market volatility came in the depression of 1873, a six-year decline that shattered the boom of the post-Civil War economy. Fittingly, it began with trouble in the railroads, spread to the banks, and exposed the weakness of an economy fueled by speculation and unsecured debt. When the government's leading private banker, Jay Cooke & Co., failed, panic overtook the capital markets. In Strouse's summation:



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> Demand dried up. Businesses contracted, cut wages, and laid off employees. Railroad construction dropped from 7,500 miles in 1872 to 1,600 in 1875; by the following year half the roads in the country were bankrupt. . . . Investment capital disappeared; foreigners lost $600 million in the United States between 1873 and 1879.[3]

The "captains of industry" then stepped forth to shape the new order of things. John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie came to dominate their industries, butt out rivals, and build great industrial empires. The firm on 23 Wall Street—Drexel, Morgan & Co.—had been spared the turmoil, and picked up the business of banks that had gone under. But Pierpont Morgan had emerged out of that crisis with a preference for a "guided" form of capitalism and a dread of unrestrained competition. The nation had no central bank to oversee and regulate the supply of currency and check economic panic; Morgan now had a view of the role that awaited him. An eastern banker who understood the capital markets of Europe and the need of a debtor nation to keep its finances in order, he sought more disciplined fiscal conditions: a sound dollar, the reduction of Civil War debt, the growth of domestic savings, and the return of the United States to the gold standard, which it had abandoned in 1862. This put Morgan in the cross currents of a great struggle between the interests and outlook he represented and the advocates of easy money, who came together from the distressed economies of the South and the West to form the Greenback Party. The Treasury/Wall Street alliance that would become a lightning rod for populists for decades to come had made its appearance, and Pierpont Morgan had played a significant part in forging it.

When Morgan subsequently stepped beyond his old concerns with the railroads and government bonds into the

[3]Strouse, op. cit., p. 152.

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realm of industrial securities, he did so in a grand fashion. In 1901 he put together the deal that purchased Andrew Carnegie's steel business, consolidated the industry, and created that great giant, U.S. Steel. A tidal wave of mergers in the economy worked its way through the land between 1897 and 1904, and the consolidation of the steel industry, now the nation's pre-eminent manufacturing concern, was part of this larger transformation. The sale of Carnegie's steel business was a straightforward proposition. Carnegie, who was leaving the world of industry to take up philanthropy, scribbled on a piece of paper his asking price: $480 million, twelve times the annual earnings of his company. Morgan accepted it without any quibble. His mastery now loomed larger than ever in the nation's economic life. That incomparable chronicler of his time, Henry Adams, wrote, "Pierpont is trying to swallow the sun."

"The First Thing Is Character"

A GREAT shift had indeed taken place, and Morgan had labored hard to bring it about. The United States had grown wealthy, and it could now finance its own securities and buy up the equities of its industries. Where once Morgan, and his father before him, had focused on channeling British investment westward across the Atlantic, the banking world in New York and other domestic sources of investment had overtaken foreign financing.

On the face of things, the trust-busters and the laws on the books—most notably the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890—should have had Morgan and his philosophy of consolidation on the run. The small-scale, rural-based antebellum economy was gone for good, urban labor unrest stalked the land, and the muckrakers wrote their exposés of ghastly deeds by the wealthy. But the truth of economic life was more subtle.

The politicians in Washington, the bankers in New York, and the industrialists throughout the heartland knew better than to launch a full-scale war between capital and political power. A run on the banks and a downturn in the economy in 1907 put on visible display the need for a politically sustainable economic strategy. A shortage of capital and money supply had triggered the crisis; between January and March of that year the Dow Jones average lost 25 percent of its value. At the hub of the rescue effort stood Morgan. A lifetime of experience had brought him to the fore, and he stanched the wound. Gold reserves successfully solicited on European markets, Treasury resources, and the vast reserves of U.S. Steel carried the day. But the brush with disaster had been close; the country was in need of a more elastic money supply and of banking legislation to protect against panic-driven damage. An aging private banker had only put off that moment of reckoning.

Beyond his banking acumen, the one characteristic that shaped Morgan was a belief in progress. America was being reinvented, and this newness appealed to him. Morgan was a worldly and progressive man at home on both sides of the Atlantic, fluent in French and German, and familiar with the capitals of Europe. He bridged the divide in American society between old and new money: he had the pedigree of the former, but the meritocratic work ethic of the latter. He had the prescience to bankroll the early work of Thomas Edison, and his home in New York was the first to be entirely illuminated by Edison's lights. Morgan also loved books and rare manuscripts, and was an avid collector of art. He represented in his person both the authority of capital and the need for its regulation. Is there a more fitting tribute to him than the fact that the Federal Reserve System, the

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nation's central bank, was launched in the year of his death, 1913?

Pierpont Morgan had not been wildly rich when he died. He left behind an estate of some $80 million. John D. Rockefeller, who never cared for the financier and his flamboyant style and cigars and his grand tours of Europe and Egypt, and who thought that the collecting of art was something both egotistical and useless, was bemused to know of the estate Morgan had left his heirs. "And to think he wasn't even a rich man", the industrialist said of the banker who cast such a large shadow over his world.

Jean Strouse did not set out to rehabilitate or prettify the image and legacy of Morgan—the robber baron, the heartless banker, the snob, the man with rhinophyma (excess growth of sebaceous tissue) whose deformed nose became the cartoonists' fodder. But by the time she has finished telling of this remarkable man and his love of order, and of his acceptance of responsibility for his country's solvency during times of crisis, by the time she has told of his love of travel and of his sexual and romantic entanglements, she delivers us an affecting portrait.

In a profound passage Strouse suggests that she had arrived at some sympathy for her subject in a surprising and unexpected way. The giants of big business, she writes, had won political ascendancy and shaped modern America. But the populists and the muckrakers had won a victory of their own: they got to write the story of that turbulent time, and so won with their pens and exposés the battle of historical narrative. John D. Rockefeller may have created a big industrial empire, but his nemesis, the tireless researcher and debunker Ida Tarbell, got to write the history of Standard Oil and so to shape for generations the public perception and profile of Rockefeller. Morgan, too, Strouse tells us, was depicted as a predator who "robbed America's farmers and workers to line his own pockets." Generations had fallen for that view of economic history. It was high time, this gifted and exacting writer observes, to tell a fuller history.

Morgan's was a simpler world than ours, of course. He was never in doubt about the basis of a workable economy and, ultimately, for him the essence of it all was moral. Shortly before his death, Morgan was called before a congressional committee with strong populist leanings. It was one of those eagerly anticipated appearances, for the aged banker was both star witness and would-be villain. Lawyers, clerks, politicians, reporters and casual visitors all came to witness the grilling. The old man resolutely stood his ground. The counsel for the committee was politically insistent, eager to show the hegemony and power of Morgan, and the long reach of his money. "Is not commercial credit based primarily upon money or property?", the lawyer asked. "No sir; the first thing is character", Morgan replied. "Before money or property or anything else . . . because a man I do not trust could not get money from me on all the bonds in Christendom." Might we be lucky enough to have Morgan's likes in this second Gilded Age?

* * *

IF MORGAN's odyssey was so thoroughly American, the tale of European finance was the tale of the House of Rothschild. From the Judengasse (Jews' Lane) of Frankfurt, this extraordinary family rose, over the course of the nineteenth century, virtually to invent the international bond market, and to tower over European finance and diplomacy.

The tale of the Rothschilds is the stuff of legend: a dealer in rare coins, one Mayer Amschel Rothschild (the family name comes from the German for "red

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shield", for the placard on the door of their house in Frankfurt) works his way out of the ghetto in the late years of the eighteenth century, and his five sons are dispatched to the capitals of Europe, in time to become Europe's wealthiest financiers. This is the material that the young and prolific Oxford historian Niall Ferguson works in his sprawling two-volume economic history of the Rothschilds.[4]

There is a certain amount of "buzz" surrounding Ferguson—he is thought of as something of an inheritor of the mantle of the late A.J.P. Taylor. This work, an "authorized" history based on Ferguson's full access to the Rothschild papers, is a major accomplishment and a tribute to his talent and tenacity as a historian. It is an overwhelming work, however, not particularly easy to read. Ferguson has not really assimilated his own historical material. He presents it raw, and drowns the story in the details at times. The sort of talent—the eye for things that matter, the "feel" for history—that gave Fritz Stern's *Gold and Iron* (1977) and David Landes' *Bankers and Pashas* (1958) their place as classics in the annals of historical writings on international finance is not to be found in Ferguson. His is big, plodding history, so crowded with characters—four generations of Rothschilds and countless statesmen who relied on Rothschild loans—as to preclude intimacy with the players.

Seizing Their Chance

FERGUSON writes that the tale of the Rothschilds is a "single myth"—a myth of "immense wealth, of meteoric social ascent; of limitless political and diplomatic power, and of some enigmatic *ultima ratio* connected with the family's religion." He gives us the elements of the myth—the details, the loans given or denied to warring European states—and for this gift readers of nineteenth-century finance should be grateful. They will have to supply their own sense of the pathos of the story, though, for this kind of texture eludes Ferguson's touch.

The two great revolutions that created the modern European world—France's Revolution of 1789 and the Industrial Revolution pioneered by Britain—gave the Rothschilds their chance. France's revolt had shaken up the old systems of privilege and exclusion, and opened new possibilities for the Jews of Europe. When the revolutionary armies of France overran Germany, they literally demolished the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt. For Mayer Amschel and his children, a much bigger world was suddenly within reach. Just a few years later, the patriarch of the family sent the most capable of his sons, Nathan, to represent the family in Britain. Arriving in 1800 to be a merchant in the textile industry, he was that country's—and perhaps the world's—single wealthiest individual at the time of his death in London in 1836. Three decades later in France there were estimates that the fortune of his brother James amounted to 4 percent of France's GDP. The Rothschilds would partake of the glories of that "long century" in European history, from the Revolution of 1789 to the eruption of the First World War, and be seared by the populism and anti-Semitism that shadowed the emancipation of the Jews. As capital replaced land as the source of power, and as aristocracy yielded to commerce, the Rothschilds were both beneficiaries of that change and a lightning rod for the disgruntled and for every wave of nostalgia and reaction that swept over the raw social landscapes of the time.

"Money is the god of our time", the Jewish-born German pamphleteer and

[4]Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets, 1798-1848* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998); Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1849-1999* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999).

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poet, Heinrich Heine, wrote in 1841, "and Rothschild is his prophet." For the Rothschilds, this gibe, and all it implied, was the underside of their success. They were cosmopolitans—there were Rothschilds in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Vienna and Naples—and they had the world at their disposal. They prospered in international bonds, and made a good deal of their money on exchange rate differentials among the various European markets. They were the creditors of rulers. Governments had begun to run large deficits, railroads were criss-crossing the Continent, and the Rothschilds sat astride the world of finance and diplomacy. In an age of secrecy and tightly held information, too, the Rothschild family network delivered handsome dividends. Theirs was a formidable, perhaps impossible combination: they were simultaneously the friends of rulers and the agents of a revolution in finance and production. They could never do right by their detractors; to the progressives they were friends of reaction, to the believers in blood and soil and nationalism they were the harbingers of a cosmopolitan culture, merciless capital and an economy severed from national roots.

It was the perceptive Heine, deeply ambivalent about the House of Rothschild, who best caught this strange duality at the heart of the family enterprise. He saw that the family dubbed the bankers of reaction and the financiers of the Holy Alliance were the bearers of a deep, revolutionary undertaking:

> No one does more to further the revolution than the Rothschilds themselves . . . and, though it may even sound more strange, these Rothschilds, the bankers of kings, these particular purse string-holders, whose existence might be placed in the gravest danger by the collapse of the European state system, nevertheless carry in their minds a consciousness of their revolutionary mission.[5]

There was indeed a great irony surrounding the rise of the Rothschilds, one of no small measure of interest to readers today who are tempted to think that a new age of finance has come—and *has* to come—at the expense of the state. The House of Rothschild prospered as bankers to states and princes. Carl, the third-youngest of the sons of Mayer Amschel, who had also come to England to practice the "rag trade" (textiles), attained wealth and power by solving the riddle of supplying Wellington's armies with the gold bullion they needed to prosecute the war against Napoleon. War financing was the first big break for the Rothschilds. As Ferguson puts it, it was the Rothschild gift to make cash available at reasonable rates to an army on the march.

The next big break came their way from Prussia. In 1818 the Rothschilds underwrote a loan to the Prussian state that proved a watershed in European finance. The loan was made in sterling, not in thaler, and the interest was to be paid in London, not Berlin. In yet another innovation, the loan was issued not just in London, but in Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam and Vienna. With that Prussian loan, the creation of an international bond market was well under way.

Modus Operandi

THE CLAIM that the Rothschilds were bankers of reaction was off the mark. They were conditional supporters of the states of the Holy Alliance, more active in the affairs and finances of Austria than they were in Prussian or Russian affairs. On the whole, however, their preference was for constitutional monarchies that could be counted on more reliably to honor loans and securities. Deep down they

[5]Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets*, p. 16.

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were skeptical about all states, but their heavier presence in London and Paris should convey something of the way they judged their customers. The attitude of the brother who oversaw the Paris operation, "the Baron" James, is a fair reflection of the way this banking dynasty viewed the uncertainties of politics. He was inclined, Ferguson writes, to "salute whichever flag was run up the mast after the storm."

Private collection, London

Making It

Natty de Rothschild as Master of Hounds in 1884, the year before his elevation to the peerage.

In a perfect world, the bankers backed the winning coalition of states, and all the family branches were on the same side of the divide. Such perfection was at hand during the Crimean War, which must mark the zenith of Rothschild influence. But this good alignment of the stars would not materialize again in the decades and conflicts to come. The wars of unification and of nationalism that would follow tested the Rothschilds and their family unity in unexpected ways. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71—to cite but one, singular, important case—pitted Rothschilds on opposing sides of the war. In Frankfurt, Mayer Carl von Rothschild was swept up in the cause of the rising German empire, whereas the Paris Rothschilds were French patriots, with two of their younger members serving in the Garde Mobile. It was not easy to maintain a multinational financial dynasty in the age of nationalism. An Anglo-French axis came to predominate in the Rothschild empire, and the houses in Vienna, Frankfurt and Naples became increasingly marginalized. (The one in Naples was shut down in 1863; the Frankfurt operation was wound up in 1901.)

Governments were the Rothschilds' business partners, but governments and princes made for risky, unpredictable business. The Rothschilds had no taste for Louis Napoleon Bonaparte and his Second Empire, for example. They suspected that his adventure would come to grief. But they had to tread carefully in his world if their French base was to survive. Conversely, they admired and had a healthy measure of fear for Bismarck—the "terrible", "inexorable" Bismarck, the "great highway robber", as one of the Rothschilds described that imposing figure. But the Rothschilds had very little leverage over him, for Prussia was less indebted, and hence less open, to their influence. That great enterprise of states, war and warmaking, was hazardous to the Rothschilds as a family, but was not unprofitable to business. It gave the family's work its edge.

Though the radical pamphleteers and anti-Semites loved to write of the Rothschilds "holding the world in the hollow of their hands", there were things other than Bismarck beyond the power of

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underwriting bonds and of finance. Now and then the Rothschilds entertained ideas of using the carrot of finance to tame the fury of anti-Semitism in Russia, or to secure greater sympathy for the Jews from the papacy, but such hopes were in vain. In Russia, the winds of anti-Semitism blew at will. St. Petersburg was not Rothschild turf; they had no one on the ground there, and the Romanov court remained inaccessible to them. Nor was the Vatican susceptible to the bankers' entreaties. The papacy took Rothschild loans, but strenuously resisted granting the limited measures of Jewish emancipation in Rome for which the Rothschilds pleaded. The papacy presented the Rothschilds with a cruel choice between loyalty to kin and faith on the one hand and the hard-headed realities of finance and power on the other. In Ferguson's words: "Given the choice between boycotting the Vatican—thus losing their monopoly over the Pope's external borrowing—and accepting defeat over the Jewish question, the Rothschilds opted for the latter."

Outflanked by Change

IT IS said that the widow of Mayer Amschel once discounted the possibility of a European war in no uncertain, prideful terms. "It won't come to war; my sons won't provide money for it." Decades later, the left-leaning writer J.A. Hobson, in his influential book, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), wrote in similar terms. A major war, he observed, could not "be undertaken by any European State . . . if the house of Rothschild and its connexions [sic] set their face against it." This was the same Hobson who had described the Boer War as a conflict engineered by international bankers "chiefly German in origin and Jewish in race."[6]

When the Great War threatened, the power of finance was unable to avert it. This was a hurricane beyond the control of bankers. Natty de Rothschild—grandson and namesake of Nathan—who had risen to the peerage in 1885, foresaw a "horrid" war of unprecedented brutality and duration. He died in 1915, before the consequences of his dark vision were fully realized. He was the last of the Rothschild giants; there would be impressive descendants, some of them men of character and drive, but the obituary given him would be the last of its kind for one of his family. "The death of Lord Rothschild is an event which not even the war can overshadow", the editorialists of the *Western Morning News* wrote. The luminaries of British life were there to see him off: David Lloyd George, Arthur Balfour and Herbert Samuel among them. The chief rabbi's sermon, a few weeks later, described him quite simply as the "foremost Jew of the world."

This was the kind of eulogy Natty de Rothschild would have savored. He shared with all the descendants of Mayer Amschel fidelity to the faith. The Rothschilds were not particularly pious, but they remained proud bearers of Judaism as a culture and a source of identity. One stray case aside, conversion to Christianity was anathema to them. They had retained Mayer Amschel's admonition that the desertion of one's faith was nothing less than a crime. The Rothschilds went through doors that had previously been bolted shut against Jews, and they had done it as men and women of their faith.

The world that the Rothschilds mastered and knew was giving way by 1914. The financing of the Great War had shifted westward: the City had lost out to New York, and the Rothschilds had never managed to crack the American market. "That blasted country", as the Rothschilds called the United States, was in the main *terra incognita* to them. It had its own peculiar

[6]Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker*, pp. 269, 284.

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business culture, rambunctious and decentralized. It lacked a national bank, akin to the Bank of England or the Banque de France, with which the Rothschilds could build a working relationship (Andrew Jackson had seen to the destruction of the Bank of the United States). The world over, family banking was being outflanked by joint stock companies. The cohesiveness of transnational elite culture, which was the mainstay of the Rothschilds, was eroding by the day. The fourth and fifth generations of the Rothschilds could not master these deep changes in world finance and politics. The "guns of August", and the brutal history that followed, were one long obituary, a grim farewell to that age.

EVERY AGE, every great edifice, begets its own nemesis, and in the end is undone by the very forces it unleashes. The received wisdom is that the first age of capital was undone by the onset of a global war. But in truth, as the more careful economic historians tell us, protectionism, illiberalism and regulation predated the outbreak of war. Liberalism and declining tariffs were being reined in long before 1914. By the end of the 1870s, protectionism had reared its head. What "convergence" took place in the Atlantic economy after 1870, we are told by the economists Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson in their methodical and careful work, *Globalization and History*, was less a function of trade liberalization and declining tariff rates than of the decline in transportation costs and of the overall yields of technological advance. Outside such strongholds of free trade like England and Denmark, economic liberalism had run into the very resistance its success had stirred up. Tariff rates were going up and protectionism was ascendant throughout the Atlantic economies.[7]

Our own times offer no built-in resistance to the historical process of liberal success and illiberal backlash. There is no iron law that decrees the triumph of the market. Since 1989, economic liberalization has had the upper hand ideologically. American-style globalization—minimum government expenditures, fiscal discipline, free trade, mobility of shares and capital—has had behind it the success of the American model and the power of the American imperium. American triumphalism has played out against a background of retrenchment in Europe and Japan, and against a wider sense that the regulatory state has had its day and has lost.

But this kind of triumph is by its very nature short-lived. It must continue to rely on the success of the American example, and on the willingness of Pax Americana to shore up the global trading system and to keep it going. Economic ideas are fickle. No victory in that domain is irreversible, or beyond the power of contingency and performance. It is patently obvious that a good deal of globalization's and liberalization's success has derived from the long and remarkable bull run of the American economy. But as the issue of valuation has arisen once again in the American economy, and as the NASDAQ has lost roughly half of its value from its heights in March 2000, the triumphalism has begun to recede, and the faith in markets has given way to a subdued anxiety of reckoning.

A decade ago, economic liberalization was measured against the wreckage of socialism and the failure of the import substitution model in the ruined landscapes of the Third World. Its supremacy was therefore easy to see. It is by a different light that the model will be judged today: the light of its own performance and imperfections. And the battle between those who stress the continuity

[7]O'Rourke and Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

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of the present with the past and those who stress the novelty of this world will be settled as all such great duels are settled—material history will prevail, the scribes and the chroniclers will follow.

At some point in the future, some muckrakers, a few historians with patience, an Ida Tarbell or two and a Ferguson or a Strouse will rummage through our time. They will know better than we can know now how this political economy played out. They will pick over the legacies of our titans, and they will hold up to the light of scrutiny the sort of things our pundits said about our time and its illusions. If the history of ideas is any guide, the chroniclers of the future will be reading their world into ours as well.

* * *

Coda: On December 22, 2000, J.P. Morgan (the bank) voted itself out of existence. It was sold to Chase Manhattan for $31.8 billion. The *Financial Times* reported that the balloting, which took place at the company's old headquarters on 23 Wall Street, had happened "coolly, quickly, and with hardly a hint of sentiment." A Wall Street eccentric, a shareholder by the name of Evelyn Davis, gave the occasion a touch of flair. She turned up dressed in black—Chanel black, she said—because she was in mourning. "It was left to the mourning Ms. Davis to predict that—rather than rolling over in his grave—the bank's founder, J. Pierpont Morgan, would rise from the dead to lay a curse on the merger", the dispatch from the *Financial Times* read. We do not know if Evelyn Davis was right; what is easy to ascertain is that the old-fashioned capitalism of Morgan had endured and stood the test of time, created value and profits for its shareholders. What will survive of today's edifice, of those countless companies "built to flip", to use the language of the New Economy, remains to be seen.

At a time when the tech fortunes in the United States lost $3.3 trillion over the course of six months in the year 2000, the cold gaze of Morgan, and the unsentimentality of his successful peers, could have been salvation and corrective in the wild ride that the capital markets have taken of late. From what is known of Morgan and Carnegie, it should be easy to guess what they would have thought of the entrepreneurs pitching to them the wild schemes of e-commerce—the e-tailers of groceries and airline tickets, "one-on-one auction sites", the "content providers", and the whole lot. It should be easy to imagine them seeing through the fakeness of an economic paradigm that disconnects price from earnings, that declares itself done with the very notion of profit itself as the yardstick of value. □

Still a Way to Go

Is it not time to awake from the deceitful dream of a golden age, and to adopt as a practical maxim for the direction of our political conduct, that we, as well as the other inhabitants of the globe, are yet remote from the happy empire of perfect wisdom and perfect virtue?

—Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist* No. 6

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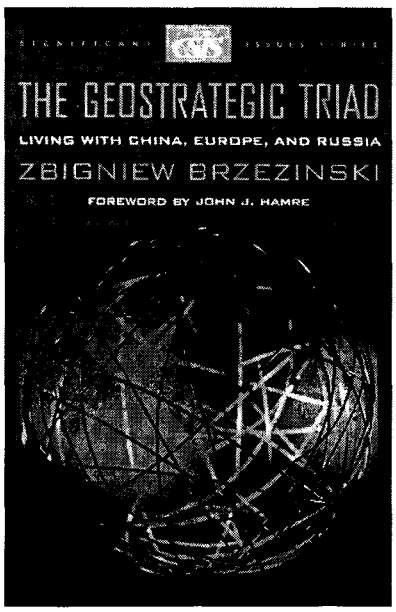

THE GEOSTRATEGIC TRIAD

LIVING WITH CHINA, EUROPE, AND RUSSIA

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Foreword by John J. Hamre

CSIS *Significant Issues Series* 88 pp. January 2001

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Contending Schools

Charles William Maynes

IN HIS BOOK *Diplomacy*, Henry Kissinger maintains that at the turn of the last century the United States faced a choice between two fundamentally different approaches to international relations, one represented by Theodore Roosevelt and the other by Woodrow Wilson. America was then emerging from decades of preoccupation with continental expansion, the country's economic might was beginning to outdistance that of all others, and its merchants were establishing trade ties in every corner of the globe. Two schools of thought, represented by two men who became president, arose to vie for influence in charting America's approach to such an altered world.

Theodore Roosevelt, president from 1901 to 1909, urged the nation to establish its relations with the rest of the world solidly on the concept of national interest, based on military might and balance of power diplomacy. Woodrow Wilson, president from 1913 to 1921, pressed the nation to support a foreign policy grounded in law and deriving strength from cooperation with others.

In Kissinger's view, and in that of others in the traditional school of foreign policy to which he belongs, Wilson won the argument. As a consequence, America's approach to the world has been colored by its resistance to the adoption of a more traditional, more European, more "realistic" view of international relations. That is to say, America has been hesitant to develop an approach to the rest of the world based on a quest for power and a determination to act according to the standard of the national interest. (We shall leave aside for now the paradox that a country allegedly so handicapped has been more successful diplomatically, and has accumulated more power, than any of the other countries that followed more traditional approaches to international affairs.)

Now America is entering another century, and, for many of the same reasons that the debate between Roosevelt and Wilson broke out at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new debate over America's role in the world is taking place. Today, as then, America finds itself having successfully concluded a long struggle and wondering what to do next. When Roosevelt and Wilson argued about the direction of American foreign policy, their clash took place against the backdrop of a nation successfully completing its internal consolidation. The nation was secure from coast to coast and hence free to consider important strategic choices, which it proceeded to do. At the beginning of the

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twenty-first century, the emerging debate over foreign policy is taking place in a nation that has successfully prevailed in a global struggle against a powerful adversary. With international communism fatally crippled or functionally dead, the Soviet Union gone and the Warsaw Pact disbanded, America is again secure and, hence, as it was a century ago, free to consider different strategic choices.

There is another similarity. Americans are optimistic today about themselves and their future. As in the days of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, we are convinced that we know the way—politically and economically—and that therefore we have an obligation, if not also a right, to lead others to a better future.

Most countries, of course, are not so blessed by geography and history as to be able to consider radical new approaches to the world. They may enjoy temporary periods of enhanced security or their populations may develop a greater sense of confidence or optimism, but geography and history predetermine their international stance. They are trapped within narrow strategic margins.

America also faced such limitations so long as it was militarily weak and had not reached its natural limits. But once the country was internally consolidated, once other major powers were definitively excluded from its hemisphere, and its own population began to exceed that of all other industrialized countries, the United States developed into a unique state in the international system: It acquired, and still possesses, a larger strategic margin than that enjoyed by any other power.

It is therefore quite understandable that, at the beginning of the last century and at the beginning of this one, a debate over basic strategic options could take place. A country so confident and so secure begins to understand that it has options open to it that are not available to others. It has the luxury of the kind of public debate about its external options that most state elites try to avoid. And, indeed, over the past few years three schools of American commentators have begun to clarify three different approaches to the issue of America's place in the world. Various labels have been applied to these schools. I believe that they are best described—in terms of the scope they envisage as appropriate for their country's role—as the controllers, the shapers and the abstainers, it being understood that each school has its conservative and liberal wings.

The earliest of the three schools to advance its case has been that which seeks to *control* the international system. Its adherents are the self-proclaimed hegemonists, who have decided that it is in America's interest to use its immense power not merely to make America the leader of the international system—its *primus inter pares*—but to dominate it. They call for major sacrifices in money and, if necessary, in blood to ensure that the American domination lasts as long as possible (though they acknowledge that one day it must end).

The *shapers* believe that a quest for leadership is more realistic than a quest for domination. They are cautious about the use of power. They believe that as powerful as America may be today, it cannot prevail without the help of others. In concert with allies and friends, America's goal should be to shape the changing international environment into more permanent patterns that will benefit U.S. interests over the longer run.

In forming their view of America's international posture, the *abstainers* focus on the demise of the Soviet Union and the pacifying effects of globalization. Since America is now no longer threatened by a major international foe, and as globalization is benign, America can comfortably scale down its active role in the world, trust-

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ing to natural balances the task of keeping the peace.

Despite their differences, all three schools of thought are attempting to confront the fundamental problem in international relations: How can the state be made secure? Each school of thought strives to place America within a system that will provide that security. The controllers believe it must be a system that America determines. The shapers believe it must be a system that America molds with the cooperation of others. The abstainers believe that the international system is now sufficiently benign or nonthreatening that America should neither control nor mold it.

A closer examination of each of these three broad schools of thought may shed light on the nature of American interests as we enter the twenty-first century.

The Controllers

IN THE post-Cold War context, the first to speak for the controllers was the administration of George Bush. As that administration drew to a close in late 1992, a draft Pentagon strategy paper, leaked to the press, called for the United States to exploit the demise of the Soviet Union in order to prevent the rise of any other power that could challenge the strategic position of the United States. U.S. policymakers would take steps not only to prevent the re-emergence of another threat based in Moscow, but also to make sure that America's allies, in particular Germany and Japan, remained in a dependent condition.

Such views have not been restricted to Republicans. In the late 1990s, Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser in the Carter administration, published *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, in which he argued, with reference to the approach of ancient Rome, that America should exploit its new dominance to follow a strategy "to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together."

The American press judged the paper developed by the Bush Pentagon to be a bid for world hegemony. In response to the ensuing public furor, the Bush administration repudiated the paper as official policy, though, as the administration left office, the Pentagon published a declassified version that said much the same thing in more subdued language.

Given one's view of the international system, the position expressed in the paper can remain not only a legitimate option but a necessary choice for the United States. The new "hegemonic realists" begin their arguments with a fear and an observation: No state, not even an ally or a democracy, can be trusted over the long run. Inevitably, another state will rise up to challenge U.S. power. Ever has it been thus and ever will it be.

America now has power unparalleled in the modern era. Perhaps not since the days of imperial Rome or ancient China has a single state so dominated the international system. Like them, the United States towers above others in military technology, economic development, political cohesion and cultural magnetism. Why not use that power, as Rome did, to hold down others as long as one can?

Vocal in expressing the conservative side of this viewpoint have been William Kristol and Robert Kagan of *The Weekly Standard*. The case they make can be traced back to arguments advanced by Hans Morgenthau in his seminal book on power politics, *Politics among Nations*, published in the early 1950s. According to Morgenthau, "Human nature, in which the laws of politics have their roots, has not changed since the classical philoso-

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phies of China, India, and Greece endeavored to discover those laws." If this statement is true, then it is a chimera to expect much better behavior from modern states than the recorded behavior of ancient states. The wars, massacres and betrayals will continue unless a hegemon emerges to force other states into a structure that makes it impossible for them to threaten the hegemon, or one another.

From such a pessimistic view of human nature, guidelines for policy follow:

- The United States should seek hegemony because, if it does not, someone else will. Better America dominating others rather than others dominating America.
- The international system, inherently anarchic, needs someone in control. Today, the United States is the only power able to impose control on the international system. If America does not exercise control, there will be either control by others or chaos.
- Others will strive to displace America from its position of superiority, and some of them may be dangerous. Precisely for that reason, America must use its superiority to retard others in their effort to develop the ability to challenge the United States.
- Though no one likes a hegemon, America will be a much better hegemon than others would be. On balance, America will exercise its power with some restraint. American hegemony will be relatively benign and therefore perhaps more tolerated.
- Whoever dominates the international system militarily will, to a significant extent, be able to dictate to it politically and economically. This presents the United States with an opportunity to "fix" in place the system, at least temporarily, to its own benefit.

Though the "controllers" acknowledge that ultimately other powers will rebel against American hegemony, and at some point will coalesce to attempt to pull America from its perch, it is in the U.S. interest to delay that moment as long as possible. Doing so will be expensive. The editors of *The Weekly Standard* call for a sharp increase—as much as $80 billion yearly—to the already large American defense budget (a budget that is currently larger than the combined military expenditures of all the other major powers).

There is also a liberal or progressive answer to the question of what to do with America's enormous and essentially unchallenged military power in a post-Cold War world that similarly favors American control. Progressives typically distrust a foreign policy based on the cold, traditional definition of national interest, an approach to international affairs that they associate with war and conquest. As a rule, they are also more optimistic about the human condition, rejecting the belief that human nature is unchanging.

At the same time, many progressives believe profoundly that, properly used, the power of government is capable of bettering the human condition. They also mourn the fact that the international system, though much safer since the demise of the Soviet Union, is not sufficiently benign in character. There are still states governed by evil people. There is still much suffering and unrealized human potential. Since America enjoys such military superiority, they argue, why not use that power, not to hold down friends, but to eradicate evil and to do good?

These "hegemonic liberals", then, accept that international affairs involve some harsh realities, but contend that, through democratic governance, America and probably all of its democratic allies have risen above them. As the world consists, then, of the civilized and the uncivilized, it is the duty (and in the interest) of the former to impose order on the latter.

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Authors like David Rieff, deputy editor of *World Policy Journal*, thus urge the United States to exploit its military superiority, not to impose a world hegemony over states (such as China or Germany) with the inherent potential to challenge America some day, but to impose order over currently distasteful, uncivilized powers like the Balkan states, Sierra Leone and Haiti. In Rieff's stark words, "Our choice at the millennium seems to boil down to imperialism or barbarism."[1] In the last century, people talked of the "white man's burden." In this century, the hegemonic liberals urge America to assume a decency burden. America should use its power to compel others to behave properly.

The very disparity between America's military power and that of the rest of the world imparts tremendous emotional force to this call for decency. The disparity, it is maintained, implies an obligation to act. In these terms, America in the international system begins to resemble the adult in a school playground who witnesses a large teenager beating up on a five year-old. Does that adult not have an obligation to step in to stop the abuse?

Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, of course, it would have been impractical and dangerous for America to act in the way either branch of controllers—conservative or liberal—wishes it to act. But given the preponderance America now enjoys, the controllers maintain that it would be a dereliction of national interest or moral duty not to do so.

The Shapers

THE QUESTION arises: Do the American people have the taste for empire that such a project of control would entail? Do Americans have either the will or the skill to lord over foes, allies or the "uncivilized"? George Kennan, the historian and diplomat, cautions his fellow Americans not to be mesmerized by their own power. In humanitarian interventions that would require taking over the powers of other governments to the point of engaging in a form of neocolonialism, "neither dollars nor bayonets" will assure success, he warned in an interview with the *New York Review of Books*.

In light of such considerations, another school of thought has risen up: the "prudent realists", or shapers, as I shall call them. Its adherents argue that, rather than engage in a futile and dangerous quest for hegemony, America should work with others to try to shape the international environment in a manner that serves not only its national interest, but that of the others as well.

Former officials of the Clinton administration's Department of Defense occupy the conservative wing of this school. William Perry, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and Ashton Carter have asserted that the United States in recent years has lost sight of its true national interest, which is protection of the heartland. The vagaries of press interest and coverage have redirected the nation's attention and energies away from core issues toward areas of concern that are not critical to the nation's future. What is more important: a better government in Haiti or guarding against a backlash in Russia similar to the reaction in Weimar Germany that led to Hitler's rise? Should the nation's top diplomats be spending most of their time on the Balkans, or trying to assist China in a peaceful transition from communist renegade to reliable regional partner?

These analysts have classified threats to the United States into three categories:

• Threats that could affect America's core security; e.g., a wayward Russia, a

[1]Rieff, "A New Age of Liberal Imperialism?", *World Policy Journal* (Summer 1999), p. 10.

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hostile China, widening acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

• Regional conflicts that might involve the United States because of treaty commitments or balance of power considerations; e.g., a war in the Persian Gulf.

• Problems at the periphery that capture the headlines; e.g., Kosovo, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia and Haiti.

Another conservative shaper is Richard Haass, until recently director of Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution and now head of policy planning in the Bush State Department. U.S. primacy, he cautions, cannot last forever. Hence, America's goal should be to persuade other centers of power to support "constructive solutions" to the issues that the world will face. America should attempt to build an international order based on four premises: less of a reliance on force to resolve international disputes; reducing the number of weapons of mass destruction; settling for a limited doctrine of humanitarian intervention; and maximum feasible economic openness. Could there be a better agenda for a prudent realist?

The categories we have discussed thus far help to clarify the Clinton administration's foreign policy record. Overall, the administration proved to be more cautious than a "hegemonic liberal" might hope. It stopped short of such ventures as engaging in nation-building in Africa, for example. But it proved to be more adventuresome than a prudent realist might prefer. It did, after all, establish a U.S. protectorate in the Balkans, under a NATO flag, that will in all likelihood last for decades.

The Clinton administration's preference, however, was to assume a more benign world than that which exists in the Balkans. In so far as it is possible to discern a clear, primary concern over the past eight years, it has been one of trying to assist history's "invisible hand" to spread democracy and free markets. The belief was that this hand was already at work, but that it needed the application of American diplomacy to accelerate its progress.

A much more optimistic and liberal vision of the international system and of human nature than that held by the hegemonists lies behind the Clinton approach. Research by scholars such as Michael Doyle, a professor of political science at Princeton University, has advanced evidence for the belief that democratic states are by their very structure peaceful, at least in their dealings with one another. With this core belief as a foundation, the Clinton administration's preference was for policy that would spread free markets, which would lead to the development of a middle class, whose members, in turn, would demand an opening of the political process. It was a form of upside-down (or right side-up) Marxism: Economics drives politics, but this time toward middle class democracy, not the dictatorship of the proletariat. And since democracies do not attack one another, free trade will bring not only prosperity but world peace. At the end of this cycle, the rules of international politics themselves can be rewritten, codified, and the new structure strengthened through institutionalization.

The theory, of course, rests on the assumption that what *has not* happened until now—democracies warring with one another—*cannot* happen. The test might come if countries with no liberal tradition—say, those of the Arab world—were to become democratic, and then were engaged in contesting access—both on the part of each other and of outside democracies—to vital resources such as water and oil. Would democracy then prevent them from fighting?

In any case, given such an optimistic theory as a premise, any sensible administration would be concerned to give histo-

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ry a push. Following this logic, the Clinton administration has aggressively pressed for the establishment of free-trade agreements with a growing number of countries around the world. It also pressed the issue of enlarging NATO even at the cost of disturbing relations with Russia. President Clinton put the final theoretical piece in his approach to international politics in place when, in his last year in office, he called for Russian membership in both the European Union and NATO, once Moscow met the membership criteria. Pulling Russia into some kind of institutional structure could suspend the laws of international politics that have applied in Europe for centuries, just as it is assumed that American world hegemony could suspend those laws for much of the rest of the world.

The Abstainers

TWO SEMINAL events have made the position of abstainer a more credible approach to foreign policy than it was for most of the twentieth century: the end of the Cold War and what we have quickly learned to call globalization.

After World War II, the struggle with the Soviet Union rendered the position of American isolationism untenable. An enemy that seemed to have a presence everywhere had to be confronted everywhere. At the same time, the model of economic development Western states had developed as a result of the experience of both the Great Depression and the Second World War called for a committed form of internationalism, involving market interference by governments and their public sector bankers to keep the world economy on the right track. Now the Cold War has ended and the growing strength of globalization, with its open borders and floating exchange rates, has put the market back in the driver's seat.

With the loss of an external threat, the U.S. government was suddenly deprived of the argument that there was no foreign policy option other than internationalism. And with the "invisible hand" working its globalist magic, Americans and others had yet another reason to reconsider their approach to international affairs. Governments began to lose their monopoly over international relations. Transnational actors—businesses, nongovernmental organizations, the news media and private individuals from Jimmy Carter to George Soros to the Pope—quickly came to exert more influence than senior U.S. officials.

Looking at these developments, some observers—Jessica Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, for example—contend that a "power shift" has taken place in international politics and that transnational actors are now "able to push around even the largest governments." If one believes these actors are benign, as many globalists do, one might well conclude that we should sit back and relax, since increasingly governments can present only the "appearance of free choice" when they set out to make the rules.[2] Of course, individuals who hold such views know that the new force of globalization brings some ill as well as much good. Nevertheless, the case they make progressively calls into question whether the historic game of geopolitics played by empires and democracies alike throughout the course of history will continue to dominate international politics. Why not, then, draw the obvious conclusion that a frantic concern with control is misplaced and pointless, and that the most that is called for will be modest and occasional efforts at small course corrections?

While Mathews and those who agree with her make a persuasive case and point

[2]Mathews, *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1997), pp. 53, 57.

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to real and important changes, the fact that similar claims about the consequences of interdependence and earlier versions of "globalization" have been made by others in the last two centuries—Cobden, Marx and Engels, Norman Angell immediately come to mind—suggests that a degree of caution is in order. The demise of the sovereign nation-state has often been announced, but it is a long time dying.

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, in his bestselling book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, expresses the new view graphically when he contends that if a nation wishes to enjoy the prosperity of the new globalized economy, it must put on a "Golden Straitjacket." And once a nation is properly fitted, it finds that "two things tend to happen: your economy grows and your politics shrinks." The competence of the state remains important, Friedman argues, but as in the delimited role of tailor and valet for the straightjacket.

Countries so bound may enjoy "more growth and higher average incomes", but their political and economic policy choices are narrowed to "relatively tight parameters." In Friedman's view, this is the principal reason that there is now very little difference between the policies of those in power and those in opposition "in those countries that have put on the Golden Straitjacket." Supporting his case is the record of governments in France and the United States in recent years. Regardless of election promises or changes in administration, policy remains fundamentally unaltered.

Of course, the suggestion is that it would be rational for governments to put on the Golden Straitjacket voluntarily. But as not everyone involved in the game of international politics is rational, Friedman would not abandon the military instrument. Nevertheless, his view of globalization, which is widely shared in financial circles, offers a very optimistic view of international relations, one suggesting that countries increasingly will lock themselves into an international structure of economic interchange that will ensure a more peaceful world. Within this structure, problems like international terrorism and criminality may remain, but the scale of bloodletting experienced in the world wars will be gone forever. Indeed, once every country is in the straitjacket, the centuries-old problem of international security will largely be solved.

Thus for the liberal abstainer, economics is more important than politics; conversely, for the conservative abstainer—the traditional isolationist—politics is more important than economics. The liberal abstainer, convinced that globalism will lift all boats, believes the nation's highest priority is to open markets among economies and communications among cultures. The conservative abstainer, on the other hand, is worried that global forces will constrict political choice in the United States and thus erode national sovereignty—precisely the development their liberal counterparts praise.

Tom Friedman wants America, like other nations, to wear the Golden Straitjacket. Pat Buchanan fights to ensure that, no matter what the benefits, America will never try it on, because once worn it will be impossible to shed. Buchanan, it is worth noting, can only take the positions he does because America is now so secure. The United States can go its own way only as long as that is true. Buchanan would use America's strength to consolidate the home front, with America ready to repel any power that dares challenge the United States in any fundamental way.

The goal is to keep America out of harm's way, and the best way to do this now is through disengagement rather than engagement. The United States can

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withdraw from the 1947 Rio Pact with Latin American governments—which calls for collective action against a potential aggressor—because no such aggressor exists. It can abrogate any security treaty that requires the country to go to war automatically, while at the same time remaining allied with certain critical states. These states will no longer need an American armed presence on their soil to ensure their security, but will settle for American good will. Thus, U.S. ground troops would leave Western Europe and South Korea. In other words, America need no longer serve as a front-line state forever taking the lead; it can return to the restricted and safer role of the West's "strategic reserve."

Ironically, the hegemonists and the isolationists share a common vision: Each group wants to make sure that America remains the sole arbiter of its own fate, the former by keeping others subservient, the latter by staying out of their quarrels. The shapers, both conservatives and liberals, do not believe that U.S. power, vast though it has become, is sufficient for America to ignore or reject the need for allies and friends.

Questions and Choices

AT THE BEGINNING of the last century, Americans interested in foreign policy had an advantage that those similarly interested today do not: Leading the debate over foreign policy choices were two exceptionally eloquent national figures—Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

By contrast, today's politics produce—perhaps require—political figures of narrow electoral calculation rather than lofty policy conviction. Since Reagan in the 1980s, no recent president or presidential candidate has been willing to make his vision of America's role in the world a major thrust of his message to the country. All have suffered from the lack of the "vision thing", and perhaps all agree in private that displaying it might prove politically lethal.

The schools of thought that have developed in recent years are therefore the work of a mostly anonymous foreign policy intellectual elite rather than that of major national figures. This circumstance has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that we are not carried away by eloquence alone. Woodrow Wilson, by all accounts a mesmerizing speaker, may have been more skilled at framing issues for the public than Teddy Roosevelt. But it is not clear that he had a better approach to international relations for the period the country was entering than did Roosevelt. To put the best gloss on his career, he appears to have been ahead of his time.

A key disadvantage surrounding our current debates is that they take place out of electoral earshot. The three schools of thought, each with its two ideological wings, frame thinking on foreign policy. They help to determine responses from administrations. But they pass no test of public support, so that, even if adopted, their doctrines are subject to rapid repudiation. And, indeed, in recent years the United States has announced and then renounced such different foreign policy approaches as a "new world order", assertive multilateralism, *à la carte* interventionism, priority to Russia and China, stress on alliance ties, democratic enlargement, and humanitarian intervention.

An expressly public and political forum is needed to begin to answer some fundamental questions: America has the power of Rome, but does it have its ambition? If America acquires the ambition, will it be able to maintain it? Americans clearly enjoy the role of leader, but will they accept the sacrifices that such a role will inevitably require?

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Americans insist that others consult them, but will Americans consult with others? Americans want partners, but do they always understand the difference between partners and supplicants?

Should America's guiding star be respect for the law, or should it be the establishment of order? Is America's premier role model abroad that of the judge or the general?

Do Americans believe that the laws of international relations are immutable, or do they believe that states, if set in a certain institutional structure, can move beyond a mere quest for power? What is that structure and to which states does it apply?

Realists denounce those who urge humanitarian interventions, but can a hegemon maintain the respect from others that its position requires if it remains totally indifferent to what is happening within the system, even at the periphery? On the other hand, does the rule that assertive hegemons will, sooner rather than later, be met by countries determined to balance and contain their power—does that rule not apply to American hegemony? And if not, why not?

America is a status quo power that benefits enormously from the current balance of power in the international system. But, considering that a wave of anti-Americanism is sweeping the globe, should it rest content?

Americans need a serious debate on how best to defend their advantage. It seems unlikely, on the basis of a decade of waiting, that this debate will develop as a result of executive branch initiative. It is perhaps time for the Congress to open up hearings on the advantages and disadvantages of the broad options that the three schools of thought outlined here have developed. □

It Was Ever Thus

Whenever, and from whatever causes, it might happen; and happen it would, that any one of these nations or confederacies should rise on the scale of political importance much above the degree of their neighbours, that moment would those neighbours behold her with envy and fear: Both those passions would lead them to countenance, if not to promote, whatever might promise to diminish her importance; and would also restrain them from measures calculated to advance, or even to secure her prosperity. Much time would not be necessary to enable her to discern these unfriendly dispositions—She would soon begin, not only to lose confidence in her neighbours, but also to feel a disposition equally unfavorable to them: Distrust naturally creates distrust, and by nothing is good will and kind conduct more speedily changed, than by invidious jealousies and uncandid imputations, whether expressed or implied.

—John Jay, *The Federalist* No. 5

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Mugabe, Mbeki, and Mandela's Shadow

R.W. Johnson

ZIMBABWE in the mid-1990s was a crisis waiting to happen. President Robert Mugabe had seen his ambitions of creating a one-party, Marxist-Leninist state thwarted by economic reality and the need to submit to International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions, but neither he nor his ruling party—the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF)—had assimilated the fact that their entire world-view had been found wanting. The result was a polity becalmed before a storm: a corrupt, bloated and hegemonic party presiding over a stagnant economy, and a president and a bureaucracy facing rising popular discontent but wholly unwilling to reform—let alone loosen their grip on power.

In 1997, facing hostile demonstrations from Zanu-PF's own guerrilla war veterans—the fighters who had brought him to power—Mugabe finally snapped. He tore up his commitments to the IMF, awarded large and unbudgeted pensions to the war veterans, announced the seizure of white-owned farm land, and lurched toward economic catastrophe. His complete dependence on IMF loans caused an initial backdown from his farm seizure plan, but a series of strikes, food riots and a growing movement of political opposition saw him increasingly cornered.

Things came to a head with the government's defeat in the constitutional referendum of February 2000, which caused Mugabe to turn to a form of political repression that involved complete defiance of economic rationality. The result has been a society in a furious state of self-destruction. Zimbabwe is racked by the highest AIDS rate in the world, sharp economic contraction, soaring unemployment, an unpayable and still soaring foreign debt, continuous fuel shortages, a flight of skilled workers, repeated food riots, and 70 percent inflation. The referendum defeat showed that if the process of democracy were ever allowed to prevail, the twenty-year rule of Mugabe and his Zanu-PF would soon be over.

But no liberation movement in southern Africa has ever lost power, or considers it thinkable that it should do so. Believing that their history of resistance to white rule endows them with a sort of permanent righteousness, Mugabe and his party have felt free to use whatever means they like to stay in power; after all, they say, they came to power by the sword and if necessary will stay in power that way. Hence the violent repression both against the burgeoning Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the tiny white minority. Mugabe and

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Zanu-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Mugabe's party)

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwean opposition party)

SADC: Southern African Development Community

ANC: African National Congress (Mbeki's party)

NDI: National Democratic Institute

IRI: International Republican Institute

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

Cosatu: Congress of South African Trade Unions

ZCTU: Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

his party enforcers have used mass beatings, systematic torture, organized gang rapes, house burnings, death threats and every kind of police and army brutality to intimidate the opposition. Mugabe proudly boasts that he has "a degree in violence" and that the MDC "will never, never rule Zimbabwe." Thirty-four black and seven white farmers have been murdered. Over and over again the courts have found the government acting illegally in almost every sphere of life; Mugabe's response has been to disregard the courts and attack the judges. In his eyes the intrinsic righteousness of being a liberation movement simply trumps all other moral or constitutional considerations.

Despite this overwhelming repression, the MDC won 57 of the 120 elected seats in the June 2000 parliamentary elections and clearly enjoys majority support: a poll in October showed the head MDC candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, leading Mugabe by almost three to one as the people's choice for president. Mugabe, now 76, is clearly determined to run again in the March 2002 presidential election, and it seems certain that the country—forecast by the IMF to suffer negative growth of 10 percent this year—will see continuous violent repression for some time to come.

It may seem tempting to dismiss Mugabe as merely another lunatic Third World tyrant, but the Zimbabwean crisis is far more important than that. When Mugabe became president, the late Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere told him to look after Zimbabwe well, for it was "the jewel of Africa." It was not only exceptionally beautiful and a tourist magnet, but it also had one of the continent's highest per capita incomes, one of its best educated populations, considerable natural wealth, and zero foreign debt. For Zimbabwe to have self-destructed so spectacularly represents a crisis not only for the fourteen other member states of the surrounding Southern African Development Community (SADC), but for Africa as a whole.

The Key Supporter

MUGABE's stature—alongside South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), Namibia's SWAPO, Mozambique's FRELIMO and Angola's MPLA—as a leader of the liberation struggle has led to an extraordinary Western myopia. Examples are legion. In one notable instance, Mugabe, aiming to head off a movement for constitutional reform, set up a wholly rigged Constitutional Commission, which—ignoring the universal popular demands for greater restraint on presidential power and for his resignation—produced a constitutional draft concentrating even greater powers in the presidency. This draft would have enabled Mugabe to serve for a further twelve years, and permitted him to expropriate property without compensation.

The draft—thunderously voted down in February 2000—emanated from a commission paid for by the Ford, Kellogg and Carnegie Foundations. The local chief of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Carlos Lopez, broke all normal diplomatic rules to speak openly in favor of it. The Goebbels of the Mugabe regime, Jonathan Moyo, who has justified

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its every excess and is arguably even more extreme than Mugabe, was recruited directly from the Ford Foundation, his employer for the previous five years. Moreover, Western aid continued to flow to Mugabe long after he had publicly justified the torture of journalists and made it clear that he had no regard for the rule of law. Speaking in April 2000 in the presence of the Swedish minister for development at the inauguration of a new dam paid for by the Swedes, Mugabe publicly made death threats against Tsvangirai for daring to oppose him. It was only after furious lobbying by local civil rights groups that Swedish aid was suspended.

This Western myopia has occluded another key aspect of the Zimbabwean crisis. Robert Rotberg, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, notes that President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa—"the continent's shining light"—has consciously refrained from criticizing Mugabe. Nevertheless, Rotberg holds up Mbeki as an example of successful African leadership and even suggests that other African leaders be given "carefully tailored courses and seminars" so that they can learn from the South African model.[1] This endorsement altogether fails to notice that Mbeki has stood—and continues to stand—solidly behind Mugabe.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that there would be no Zimbabwean crisis without this key dimension of South African support. As former South African Prime Minister John Balthazar Vorster showed when he made Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith accept majority rule and allow Rhodesia to become Zimbabwe, a South African government has the leverage to make Zimbabwe do as it wishes. It is this phenomenon of Mbeki's and the ANC's support for Mugabe—betraying the entire human rights tradition of the South African liberation struggle—that has given the Zimbabwean crisis its truly continental and tragic significance.

On January 8, 2000, President Mbeki, taking up his favorite theme of an African Renaissance, called for an end to military regimes in Africa. "We [Africans]", he admitted, "continue to allow tyrannical regimes to impose themselves on us." This caused a certain amount of eyebrow-raising, for Mbeki—unlike Mandela—had been quite unbothered about his dealings with the blood-stained regime of Nigeria's Sani Abacha, and maintains extremely cordial relations with Qaddafi and Castro.

Meanwhile, the South African High Commission in Harare was signaling frantically that the unthinkable was about to happen: despite the fact that government propaganda monopolized the state-owned media and the government was spending heavily against a completely out-gunned opposition, it looked as if the tyrant next door, Mugabe, was about to lose the constitutional referendum.[2] Zimbabweans were now experiencing regular electricity cuts and chronic fuel shortages; every fuel queue was in effect a recruitment agency for the opposition.

Mbeki had little reason to like Mugabe, who had sided with the ANC's rivals, the Pan Africanist Congress, during the liberation struggle and who had shown arrogance and bad temper at being upstaged by Mandela's arrival on the international stage. Nonetheless, Mbeki's instinct was, from the first, to give Mugabe—his fellow liberation movement leader—all-out support. Although Mbeki pooh-poohed the notion that Mugabe could lose,[3] he decided to leave nothing to chance. Canceling a long-standing commitment to attend the opening of the Nelson Mandela Museum, he rushed to Harare on the eve of the referendum—accompanied by a high-power team that included his ministers of finance, energy and minerals—and offered Mugabe an 800 million

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rand* loan with which to purchase fuel and electricity. Already the state-owned South African electricity and oil companies, Eskom and Sasol, were supplying Zimbabwe on credit—something others refused to do—and Eskom was already owed 120 million rands as a result. South Africa, indeed, supplies 40 percent of all of Zimbabwe's imports. In addition, Mbeki also promised Mugabe that he would attempt to mediate with the IMF to get it to release funds to Zimbabwe.[4]

There is little doubt that the Mugabe government rigged the referendum results where it could. In Matabeleland South, for example, the official results showed 51.4 percent voting for the government—while a simultaneous opinion poll showed that more than 80 percent of voters there opposed the government.[5] But it was impossible to cheat in the two biggest cities, Bulawayo and Harare, without it being entirely obvious—and the No majorities here were so big that they overwhelmed the clearly rigged Yes majorities in the countryside: even on the official figures 55.9 percent had voted No, though the opinion survey suggested that the right figure was probably about 63 percent.

Mbeki's public display of support had clearly been intended to shore Mugabe up. When it failed to work, Mbeki began to backtrack immediately. First it was announced that no specific agreement had been signed, then that there was no loan at all but that South Africa would guarantee a rand-denominated Zimbabwean bond, and then that Mbeki would mediate for Mugabe with the World Bank. All of this quickly collapsed to nothing. It was clear that there would be dire consequences for South Africa's own credit rating if it were to guarantee Mugabe's debts—after all, the country does not even guarantee bonds issued by its own parastatals such as Eskom and Telkom. Neither the World Bank nor the IMF is willing to negotiate via intermediaries, and in any case both have attached conditions to lending to Zimbabwe, such as the withdrawal of its troops from the Congo, budget deficit reduction and so on, compliance with which Mbeki could hardly guarantee.

In the end the deal was pronounced never to have existed, though originally it had been announced to the press by Zimbabwe's finance minister in Mbeki's presence.[6] Sasol, however, announced that it had just concluded a deal—reportedly its "biggest ever export contract for fuel"—to supply fuel to Zimbabwe.[7] While the oil company insisted that the deal was made on a purely commercial basis, Zimbabwe's chronic shortage of foreign exchange made this an extremely speculative venture, to say the least. All that had really happened was that South Africa promised it would go on supplying Mugabe with enough electricity and oil to prevent a complete economic collapse—and pray that it would get paid some day.

Escalation

THIS SITUATION was transformed, however, by the occupation of white farms by "war veterans", which began on the weekend of February 26–7, 2000. The veterans were actually mostly young, unemployed Zanu-PF activists paid for their "work" by the party. The occupations were illegal, involved the mass beatings and torture of farm workers suspected of supporting the opposition, and continued throughout the year despite repeated judicial rulings that they must cease. From this point on South African aid was being given to a regime that openly refused to accept the rule of law—even the law that it had itself

*As of February 1, 2000, one U.S. dollar was equivalent to 6.25 rands. One year later, the rate was one dollar to 7.89 rands.

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AP/Wide World

Hand in hand.

legislated over the previous twenty years. Mugabe followed up by ramming through parliament (in which Zanu-PF then held 147 of the 150 seats) the clause of the constitution that had been popularly rejected, allowing him to expropriate land without compensation. These two steps immediately cut off all possibility of IMF or World Bank aid and quickly led to the cancellation of aid by the United States, Sweden, Norway and Holland. A new bill was also published—a cyberworld first—allowing the government to vet all email and punish anyone found criticizing the government.

Both domestic and international opinion waited for Mbeki to react: How could he possibly continue to preach the African Renaissance if he did not take a stand in favor of the rule of law, against the straightforward suppression of both civil and property rights, and against the open resort to mass beatings, torture and murder? Moreover, Mugabe was intent on insulting the British premier, Tony Blair. Having previously referred to the Blair government as "gay gangsters", he now followed up with attacks on Blair's "gay philosophy and gay way of life."[8] Mbeki, as chairman of the Commonwealth, might have been expected at least to distance himself from his neighbor's unprovoked attacks on Blair. Not only did Mbeki not react, however, but on March 23 it was announced that Eskom was extending further aid to Mugabe by consolidating $14.4 million of its $20 million debt into a loan and rescheduling payment for the rest.[9]

The South African business community reacted with near stupefaction. The markets were thoroughly alarmed by the principle of expropriation without com-

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pensation and the spectacle of a ruling African nationalist party making it clear that it would use all manner of violence rather than allow a democratic alternation in power. If Mbeki failed to take a strong and public stand against Mugabe, the conclusion could only be that the ANC, faced with a major electoral challenge, might behave in the same way—and that property might be seized in South Africa as well.

At the beginning of 2000, the influential Templeton investment supremo Mark Mobius had selected South Africa as his most promising emerging market, but both he and other fund managers were overwhelmed by a flood of selling as foreign investors dumped South African equities and bonds, causing the rand to plunge. Most analysts had forecast a strengthening of the rand for 2000—according to almost any measure it was chronically undervalued in purchasing power—but in fact the currency went into free fall, ending the year almost 25 percent down. Last year was, indeed, South Africa's worst year for foreign investment since the arrival of democracy in 1994, and consumer confidence fell throughout the year, finishing at a level last seen in 1993, when large-scale violence and civil disorder seemed poised to engulf the country.[10] Normally, the South African Chamber of Business is loath to criticize the government, but its CEO, Kevin Wakeford, could not contain himself. The rand's fall and the large capital outflows the country was suffering were, he said, directly due to Pretoria's silence on the Zimbabwe issue: "South Africa has no option but to take a position", he pleaded.[11]

President Mbeki greatly dislikes being lectured by white businessmen. Government spokesmen were immediately instructed to deny that the rand's fall had anything to do with Mbeki's silence on Zimbabwe. In fact, the finance minister averred, it was caused by the general weakness of emerging market currencies, the strength of the dollar, and the fall of the euro. This convinced no one, but it now became almost a point of honor for the government to deny the significance of the Zimbabwe factor. Thus on April 9, 2000, Mbeki, as he left for the Group of 77 meeting in Havana, was asked whether he would have any message for Mugabe when he saw him there. "Why should we?", he replied. "We are regularly in touch with Zimbabwe about all sorts of things. If the Zimbabwean government thought they needed to brief us on anything in Zimbabwe, they would do so."[12]

Futile Diplomacy

PARALLEL WITH its insistence that Mbeki's silence on Zimbabwe was not the cause of the rand's collapse, Pretoria now strove to convince business that this silence masked an energetic "quiet diplomacy" and "constructive engagement" with the Zimbabwe problem. Privately it was suggested that Mbeki was only too conscious of how disastrous a leader Mugabe was, but he could have more impact on the situation if he could use an attitude of sympathy and friendship to nudge Mugabe in the right direction.

This campaign quickly had some impact. South African businessmen are a timorous lot, as keen to be on board with the ANC government as with the apartheid governments of the past, and many were so scared by the implications of the Zimbabwean crisis that they wanted to find something more comfortable to believe in. Symptomatic of this new mood was the *Business Day* editorial of April 17, which strongly supported Mbeki's refusal to comment on Zimbabwe and pleaded for a more sympathetic understanding of his position. Tony O'Reilly's Independent Group newspapers, always ready to respond to government pressure, quickly

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followed suit. The pressure on business to side with government ultimately culminated in the placement of advertisements in the press by a major business organization expressing support for Mbeki's stance on Zimbabwe—although finding any businessman who actually believed this remained virtually impossible.

If constructive engagement was to deserve support, it had to show results. Moreover, the draft protocol of the SADC organ on politics, defense and security has, since 1996, committed the organization to intervene in member states where instability had arisen as a result of a breakdown in law and order. Thus far the smaller SADC countries had all followed Mbeki's lead and refused to comment on the Zimbabwean crisis.

This was the background to the Victoria Falls Summit of April 21, 2000, attended by Mbeki, Mugabe and the presidents of Namibia (Sam Nujoma) and Mozambique (Joaquim Chissano). According to Mbeki's spokesmen, he and the other presidents got Mugabe to agree to stop the violence and facilitate the ultimate withdrawal of the war veterans from white farms, while Mbeki also asked Mugabe to cease public attacks on Blair and Britain. In return it was agreed that the other presidents should give Mugabe their public support, and that Mbeki would try to get Britain to make aid available for land reform in Zimbabwe and continue his efforts to mediate with the IMF. Mbeki apparently felt sanguine enough about things to phone Blair to tell him that a new chapter had been opened on the land reform question and that there would now be speedy progress in settling all the other outstanding issues.[13] Britain cautiously welcomed the summit's outcome, again declaring its readiness to finance land reform that respected the rule of law and whose beneficiaries were poor Zimbabweans, and not (as in the past) fat cats and Mugabe's cronies.

Britain's caution was not misplaced. Mugabe's absolute refusal to stop the violence or respect the rule of law dashed Zimbabwe's hopes of getting British or IMF money. Meanwhile, all Mbeki got were empty promises, while Mugabe got dramatic, immediate and public support. It must be remembered that the summit came after a week in which another three MDC activists and two white farmers had been murdered by Zanu-PF thugs, and in which the mass beatings of farm workers and torching of houses of both blacks and whites had taken on a routine character. There was no doubt that these atrocities occurred because Mugabe willed them—yet all three presidents came out publicly in full support of him. Chissano, acting as their spokesman, claimed that Mugabe was a "master" and a "champion" of the rule of law. When reminded that foreign funding for land reform was dependent on a transparent process, Chissano replied that such thinking was very dangerous to the region. "What you are telling us is very grave. It is creating ill feelings in our hearts. You are saying it is a sin to be a freedom fighter. It is grave if the British government thinks like that."[14] Mbeki sat by and nodded his agreement with these remarkable sentiments.

For his own part, Mbeki was wholly unwilling to criticize Mugabe's continuing human rights atrocities or even to say whose fault the violence was. Instead, he tried hard to blame Britain. The core of the problem, he insisted, was one of poor, landless blacks whose condition was the result of racism and colonialism. The main responsibility for the current crisis—and even the violence—lay in Britain's failure to fund land reform. He was openly critical of Britain for making the rule of law and a transparent transfer to the poor a *sine qua non* for funding: "I don't think it is correct for anybody to walk away from this", he declared.[15]

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What this amounted to was a complete and public excusing of Mugabe's human rights atrocities, a declaration that he should be free to carry out whatever sort of "land reform" he wanted, and an assertion that the greater wrong, dwarfing all others, was the original sin of white colonialism.

Mbeki's insistence that the crisis was really all about a land issue, caused essentially by the whites, was certainly not accepted by ordinary Zimbabweans. A survey conducted by the Helen Suzman Foundation had shown that only 9 percent of Zimbabweans thought land the most important issue, equal with those who thought poverty the key issue, but far behind those who mentioned the fall in the Zimbabwean dollar (14 percent), unemployment (25 percent) or rising prices (28 percent). Only 2 percent thought whites were most to blame for Zimbabwe's problems, while 28 percent blamed Mugabe and another 41 percent his government. Overwhelmingly the electorate said it had no confidence in Mugabe; 66 percent said they were dissatisfied by the way he had dealt with the land issue (against 26 percent who were satisfied); and only 36 percent wanted Zanu-PF to continue in power.[16]

A subsequent Suzman survey of October 2000 showed that the MDC view of the matter—that Mugabe was using the farm occupations simply as a means of trying to crush the opposition and hang onto power at all costs—was shared by a large majority. Almost 70 percent either wanted the white farmers to stay as they were or even wanted to invite back white farmers who had left Zimbabwe. Sixty-four percent said the farm invasions had nothing to do with land reform, and 70 percent said the war veterans who invaded farms were simply criminals who should be put on trial.[17] By this stage 74 percent wanted Mugabe to step down as president, against only 19 percent who did not; 56 percent wanted him impeached and 51 percent said that even if Mugabe resigned he should be put on trial for his crimes.[18]

Playing the Race Card

MBEKI's insistence—against all the evidence—that the Zimbabwean crisis revolved around a land issue caused by white colonialism was of central significance. Once the problem was defined in that way, any self-respecting African nationalist would have to side with Mugabe, whatever his faults. Moreover, the projection of this definition of the problem was quickly picked up by many black South Africans who could relate this version of reality to one they knew at home. Thus the oddity that a write-in survey of black opinion in the Johannesburg townships soon found 54 percent siding with Mugabe on the land issue, while the large majority in Zimbabwe did the opposite.[19]

Black nationalists in South Africa avidly transposed the "lessons" of Zimbabwe onto South Africa. Thoko Didiza, the minister of land and agriculture, was one of several ANC politicians who began to castigate white farmers for the slow pace of land reform, insisting that the state might need to acquire their land at submarket value if they did not lower the price. Sue Lund, her deputy director-general, helpfully pointed out that South Africa still had an Expropriation Act on the books—while Didiza herself went off on a fact-finding tour of Zimbabwe to see what lessons could be learned from its style of "land reform." The state-owned broadcasting station ran several television documentaries about the brutality of white farmers and how they evicted aged tenants—though spoke no word about the fact that South Africa's farmers, facing land invasions and farm attacks that have left over 800 of them dead since 1994, have put no less than 34 percent of the

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country's farm land up for sale. President Mbeki announced that the government would not tolerate land invasions in South Africa, but went on to attack white farmers for evicting tenants. He made no mention of the ten white farmers killed in farm attacks in the preceding month.[20]

Both the small, radical nationalist parties to the ANC's Left, the Azanian People's Organization and the Pan Africanist Congress, announced that on the Zimbabwean land issue they were supporting the ANC for the first time, reflecting how Mbeki's manner of handling the crisis had created an eager black constituency on the issue within South Africa. This was a self-invented constraint: it was now clear that if Mbeki were to take a hard line against Mugabe, he could well face domestic criticism that he was selling out poor blacks to white colonial interests. Needless to say, this perception was based on a complete and populist misreading of the situation. The real spokesman for poor blacks in Zimbabwe, Philip Munyanyi, the general secretary of the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, denounced Mbeki. His people were, he said, being burned, beaten and tortured, and Mbeki uttered no word of protest.[21] No one in South Africa paid much attention to him.

Within days of the Victoria Falls Summit it was clear that it had failed completely: the deputation to London of three Zimbabwean ministers was told that aid depended on an end to violence and land invasions and a return to the rule of law, conditions they found unacceptable. Perhaps Mugabe had lied to Mbeki at the summit or Mbeki had chosen to hear only what he wanted; either way, Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" lay in ruins, producing a further upsurge of criticism of his refusal to take a hard line with Mugabe. Mbeki doubted "whether condemning President Mugabe would solve that country's land redistribution problem. It is a problem caused by colonialism." And those who wanted Mugabe condemned were simply people who thought all black governments were alike: "Part of the reason for this demand is that there are people in society who say: If this black government in Zimbabwe can behave in such a way, what guarantee do we have that the black government in South Africa won't behave in the same way?"[22]

Three days later Mbeki went on national television to defend his "quiet diplomacy" in even more strident terms. Attacks on this policy were, he said, "racist attempts to create an atmosphere of fear in South Africa." Such critics were trying to create "a psychosis of fear in our own country based on racist prejudices, assumptions and objectives."[23] This merely confirmed the bleakest worries of both domestic and foreign investors, and the rand continued to fall.

The next day Mbeki visited Bulawayo and, standing hand in hand with Mugabe, praised him for his wisdom, asserting that land dispossession was "one of the most iniquitous results of colonization", that South Africa suffered from the same problem, and that both countries needed to work against "this colonial legacy."[24] Meanwhile, Mbeki's office, though unwilling to utter a word of reproach about Mugabe, was perfectly happy to throw blame on the British. When Britain halted export licenses for arms to Zimbabwe and stopped a shipment of 450 Landrovers, this was described as "inflammatory" and "aggressive." Mbeki was annoyed, his spokesman suggested, that Britain was not supporting his approach to the problem.[25]

Up to this point the only leading black figure to criticize Mugabe had been Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "He's almost a caricature of all the things people think black African leaders do", said Tutu. "He seems to be wanting to make a cartoon of himself." Mbeki's behavior was now even

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too much for ex-president Nelson Mandela. For months he had been chivvied in private gatherings and asked why on earth Mbeki was behaving the way he was. He had striven loyally to support his successor, but had in the end confessed that he disagreed with him on Zimbabwe, as he did on Mbeki's repeated denials of the link between HIV and AIDS. The day after Mbeki publicly embraced Mugabe, Mandela burst forth. He denounced liberation leaders who "despise the people who put them in power and want to stay in power forever. They want to die in power because they have committed crimes." Asked whether he was describing Mugabe, he retorted, "Everyone knows very well who I am talking about. If you don't know who I am talking about there is no point in telling you." Asked whether he supported Mbeki's policy toward Mugabe, he averred loyally that he did, "but the masses don't have to follow that route. The public must bring down these tyrants themselves."[26]

Not Free, Not Fair

BY THIS STAGE the June 2000 parliamentary election campaign in Zimbabwe was in full swing, with a tremendous increase in war veteran and Zanu-PF violence. Not infrequently, MDC candidates were attacked and subjected to such gross intimidation that they were unable to enter their constituencies at all, let alone campaign. The Electoral Supervisory Commission saw its functions usurped by government, international monitors were systematically blocked and hindered, the state-owned media denied the opposition air time, and right up until the eve of the election the opposition was denied knowledge of where polling booths would be placed. Even after the election the opposition and the public were denied access to the voters' roll. Whites were often barred from voting.

It is difficult to know what effect many of these barriers to democratic expression had, but there is no doubt that the violence and intimidation worked. An exit poll conducted by the Helen Suzman Foundation found that 32 percent of voters thought that some, most or all voters in their constituencies had been intimidated into voting against the party they really preferred, and 12 percent admitted that this had been true of their own vote. These figures were confirmed by the major national survey carried out by the Helen Suzman Foundation in September–October 2000: 31 percent and 13 percent, respectively, gave the same answers to the same questions. Moreover, this survey showed that large numbers of opposition voters said that they had not voted either because they had been too scared to do so or because their identification cards had been confiscated by Zanu-PF thugs. Since it was humiliating or dangerous to make such admissions, these figures should be regarded as very conservative ones. The Foundation estimated that in a properly free election the MDC would have won 58 percent of the vote and between 87 and 91 of the 120 elected seats, instead of the 57 seats it actually won.

Strobe Talbott, the U.S. deputy secretary of state, visiting Johannesburg in early May, expressed strong concern about the Zimbabwean situation: "Africa's friends . . . look to the SADC to do everything it can to encourage free and fair elections and to insist on an end to the violence." The United States, he promised, was ready to help Zimbabwe, but "we cannot and will not offer support in a climate of violence, lawlessness and intimidation."[27] The fact that this was headlined by the South African press as a ringing endorsement of Mbeki's position had less to do with Talbott than with the fact that the press was now under strong pressure to report

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Zimbabwean events in a way that would not overly embarrass Mbeki.

Thus, while the international press (and Johannesburg's *Weekly Mail and Guardian*) carried full accounts of how Mugabe's war veterans had established "torture clinics" to deal with election opponents, and of how gang rape had been deployed as a deliberate intimidation tactic against nurses, schoolteachers and pupils, such details did not get into the mainstream South African press—which also did not print the horrific pictures of opposition activists forced to sit naked on red-hot stoves. *Business Day*'s long-standing correspondent, Michael Hartnack, could not get his reports of Zanu-PF atrocities into the paper, was accused of having "an anti-Mugabe agenda", and resigned from the paper. (It tells one not a little about the current South African climate that the foreign editorship of *Business Day*—the business community's house magazine—is held by a man who pled guilty in a German court to spying for the Soviet Union.)

Most of the South African press gave no publicity to a Suzman survey, held in March, showing that 63 percent of Zimbabweans believed it was "time for a change" and only 36 percent wanted Zanu-PF to continue in power. The Foundation's June exit poll survey met a similar fate—despite the fact that both surveys received wide publicity in the international press. Instead, most of the press treated another Mugabe victory as a foregone conclusion and gave occasional space to articles suggesting that the MDC was really run by white South African interests.[28]

All of which focused increasing interest on whether the outside world would pronounce the elections free and fair. A "not free and fair" verdict would clearly embarrass Mbeki, leading to further questions as to how he could support an anti-democratic regime. It was, accordingly, apparent from a long way off that strong pressure would be applied to ensure a "free and fair" verdict, whatever the facts on the ground. The Victoria Falls Summit had shown that the other countries ruled by liberation movements—Angola, Mozambique and Namibia—could be relied upon to take this view. Indeed, Nujoma was such a strong Mugabe supporter that he stood happily by while Mugabe, on a state visit to Namibia in May, called on Namibians to stage land grabs from white farmers there, too.[29]

South Africa is, by a huge margin, the dominant state within the SADC, and it was immediately understood by the smaller SADC members that it would be unwise not to support the Mbeki line. Thus, for example, the continuous attempts by the MDC leader, Tsvangirai, to meet SADC leaders and put his case before them always came to naught; Mbeki's line that only state-to-state relations were acceptable was observed by all SADC members. Yet once the elections were over, Tsvangirai was to meet at least once with Mandela and with members of the Botswana cabinet.

Ironically, even while Zambia's Frederick Chiluba and Mozambique's Chissano gave Mugabe strong support, advertisements simultaneously appeared in the Zimbabwean press trying to tempt white farmers to settle in Zambia and Mozambique—Zimbabwe's white farmers are known for their productivity and entrepreneurship, and such qualities are in short supply in southern Africa. The logic of the situation was well understood by Pakalitha Mosisili, the premier of Lesotho, the country's poorest and most fragile mini-state. He flew into Harare in order to offer support to Mugabe in terms so slavish as to achieve the near-impossible target of surpassing the standard set by Mugabe's chief propagandist, Jonathan Moyo.[30]

Some observers were beyond Mbeki's influence, however. The American delegations from the National Democratic

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Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) were, like many others, hemmed into their rooms in Harare's Meikles Hotel, effectively forbidden by one government restriction after another from leaving the capital to observe the election. Like all other international observers—and even journalists—they had to pay a special $100 fee to Mugabe for being allowed to observe, and had one obstacle after another thrown in their way. In the end both pulled out before the election (as did the team sent by the UN), since they simply were not allowed to do their job. The head of the NDI delegation, Alex Ekwueme, Nigeria's vice president from 1979–83, announced that conditions for a free and fair election simply did not exist.[31] The IRI delegation pronounced the elections to be "the worst we have ever seen."[32]

Similarly, the EU observers—the largest of all the observer missions—excoriated the manner in which Mugabe had undermined democratic choice at every turn, as did Amnesty International, the Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Forum, the Southern African Legal Assistance Network, and a host of other monitoring and observer groups. The Mugabe government argued bitterly that it did not need or want all these foreigners coming to observe its election, and it tried hard to prevent the election monitors trained by local Zimbabwean NGOs from deploying themselves around the country. In the end less than a quarter were able to do their job.

The key point made by NDI, IRI, Amnesty and the other groups was that, irrespective of what happened on polling day, the election could not be adjudged free and fair because of what had happened in the months before it: the violence against and intimidation of the opposition, the refusal of fair media access, and the multiple administrative irregularities in the organization of the election itself. It seemed clear, for example, that the electoral register included the names of many dead or bogus voters, creating huge opportunities for electoral fraud. But the government would not allow anyone to examine the register, even though it was constitutionally bound to do so.[33]

The advance conclusions that the elections could not be free and fair were naturally not congenial to Mbeki, so on June 12, 2000 he gave an exclusive interview to the pro-government Independent Group press, in which he insisted, "We want free and fair elections in Zimbabwe. We are against stolen elections." But, he added, no one could have any idea at this stage whether they would be free and fair; such opinions were wholly speculative.[34] This pretense of neutrality was doubly bogus. It disregarded the wave of human rights atrocities occurring just across the border, as well as the close alliance that now existed between the ANC and Zanu-PF.

A Zanu-PF delegation led by John Nkomo, the Zimbabwean minister of home affairs, had been greeted with great warmth by the ANC secretary-general, Kgalema Motlanthe, in Johannesburg just a fortnight before. The ANC sided unequivocally with Zanu-PF, issuing a communiqué in which the parties announced they had "reached common ground on resolving Zimbabwe's land crisis." In particular, the ANC supported the Zanu-PF demand that Britain should give financial aid for land reform without any conditions about violence, transparency or the rule of law.[35] The meeting dispelled any lingering doubts that might have existed: the ANC was already committed to assessing any Zimbabwean election that returned Mugabe to power as free and fair.

This ANC party line had a strong impact on all the election observer groups

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under any degree of South African influence, notably the South African Parliamentary Observer Group and the observers sent by the SADC, the Organization of African Unity, and the Commonwealth. The parliamentary observer group—dominated, naturally, by its ANC component—arrived two weeks before the election, though with the die already cast. "The ANC members of the delegation arrived with their minds made up", one delegation member told me:

> They were all convinced that the MDC had very little support, that it would get five seats at most. We got briefed by both the parties. The ANC responded warmly to the Zanu-PF briefing but after the MDC briefing they complained that they 'didn't want to hear any more MDC propaganda.' They got a bit uncomfortable when they saw what things were really like and the evidence of violence against the MDC was so overwhelming. But of course that wasn't going to alter their conclusions—they were following a party line. They didn't even bother to observe the election properly and just spent all their time at discos, receptions and nightclubs.[36]

The head of the ANC delegation, Tony Yengeni (a leading member of the Communist Party), was in daily telephone contact with Mbeki throughout the election campaign and flew back to Pretoria a few days before the voting—in order, it was assumed, to report to Mbeki. He returned to Harare in time to see Zanu-PF scrape back to power by the narrowest of margins. The MDC not only trounced Zanu-PF in the towns and in Matabeleland (John Nkomo, who had led the Zanu-PF delegation to South Africa a few weeks before, lost his seat by a landslide), but even won a number of seats where its candidates had been in hiding, unable to campaign. The MDC immediately announced that it would challenge the results in over 40 of the 63 seats Zanu-PF had won, citing gross irregularities of every kind. This made no impact on Yengeni, who went to Mugabe's presidential palace, appeared hand in hand with Mugabe on television, and loudly criticized Western election observers who tried to impose their values on Africa. Africans had their own distinctive style of elections and democracy, he declared, and only it was authentic and legitimate. Mugabe sat next to him wreathed in smiles during this performance.

It was, after this, no surprise when the observer delegations from the South African parliament, the SADC and the Organization of African Unity all concluded that the election had been free and fair, or at least acceptably so. The hardest battle was fought within the Commonwealth delegation, with the South African and other allied African delegates arguing fiercely for a free and fair verdict—to the horror of the Canadians, Australians, Indians and New Zealanders. In the end the latter prevailed sufficiently for the Commonwealth report on the election to be decently critical. The EU delegation, the largest and most experienced of all, was untroubled by such divisions and came to far tougher conclusions. Mbeki proceeded to push a motion through the South African cabinet declaring that the Zimbabwean election had been "substantially free and fair"—though, of course, there had been no need for the cabinet to make any pronouncement at all on the matter.

Fooled Again

MBEKI's unswerving support of Mugabe was the more striking not only because he appeared to have been double-crossed by Mugabe at Victoria Falls, but because in May he had put a great deal of effort into running around Europe and the Middle East trying to line up financial aid for Zimbabwean land

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reform, ultimately getting Saudi Arabia and Norway to pledge 100 million rands to buy 118 white farms for redistribution. Immediately after Mbeki had done this, however, Mugabe announced he wanted to take over all 4,000 white farms—without paying for them at all, thus scuppering the deal.[37] Even such cavalier treatment seemed not to affect Mbeki's support: with the election over he flew into Harare with a large team of ministers and officials for talks on how best to help the Zimbabwean economy. The visit was, to say the least, insensitive, for it fell on the day chosen by the opposition for a mass work strike protesting the government's refusal to uphold the rule of law. The strike, supported by the unions and the farmers, turned Harare into a ghost town, as Mbeki's cavalcade rolled through deserted streets. Naturally enough, Mugabe saw this as a calculated snub to the MDC and rewarded Mbeki by having the entire cabinet meet him with ululating Zanu-PF activists singing revolutionary songs.[38]

Once again, the meeting saw Mugabe make a public fool of Mbeki. Once again, there was the same talk of large-scale South African aid and of Mbeki mediating with the IMF and other donors on Mugabe's behalf. Once again, Mugabe made public promises of good behavior, appearing on camera to assure that he would uphold the rule of law, that war veterans who harassed farmers would be arrested, and that all war veterans would soon be made to leave the farms they had invaded. The next day, with Mbeki back in South Africa, Mugabe went on camera once again to insist that he had never said all the things he had said the day before.[39]

Undaunted, Mbeki, attending the UN Millennium Summit in New York in September, met with Kofi Annan, Mugabe and the presidents of Malawi and Namibia to try to broker UN and UK aid to Zimbabwe—and even prevailed on Tony Blair to come to dinner with Mugabe to the same end. As before, everything broke down on Mugabe's refusal to concede transparency, an end to violence, and the rule of law.[40] The fact that Zimbabwe's economy was crumbling into ruin day by day made no difference to Mugabe, who had, in effect, decided that to concede such conditions meant losing power. Indeed, he showed a cavalier disregard for economic constraints, bringing a delegation of forty-seven (including family members) to New York at enormous cost.

Mugabe moved on from the UN to Harlem, where he held a large rally together with Louis Farrakhan, Herman Ferguson of the New African Liberation Front and other such figures. Coltrane Chimurenga of the December 12 Movement introduced Mugabe, saying, "On behalf of 40 million captured Americans we have brought our President home." Among the proposals made to an enthusiastic crowd were that all black prisoners in U.S. jails should be given honorary Zimbabwean citizenship, and that genetically modified food was a way of "killing black people in the U.S. slowly." Mugabe told the crowd that the IMF, the World Bank, Britain and America were all "an Anglo-Saxon plot between Congress and Blair and his lot", this despite having just been Blair's dinner guest. Mugabe told the crowd what he thought of whites: "What we hate is not the colour of their skins but the evil that emanates from them."[41] The relatives of a number of those tortured or murdered by Mugabe's thugs in Zimbabwe took the occasion to serve him a writ seeking $400 million in damages and accusing him of gross human rights atrocities. Mugabe did not contest the case, heard before a Manhattan Court, and judgment was rendered against him, making it highly problematic for him to visit the United States again.

None of this—not the food riots in Harare in October nor Mugabe's contin-

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ued campaign of violence and murder against the MDC and white farmers—seemed to have any effect on Mbeki, who, by December, was back in Harare with President Obasanjo of Nigeria trying to get the United Nations Development Program to fund Zimbabwean land reform. Once again, Mbeki was pictured hand in hand with Mugabe—and once again, the UNDP backed off because of Mugabe's refusal to accept conditions about the rule of law and a halt to violence.[42]

Meanwhile, South Africa has continued to supply Zimbabwe with the oil, electricity and credit lines without which Mugabe could not survive. In December 2000, South Africa's Eskom cut electricity prices to Zimbabwe by 25 percent, despite increases in oil prices and the $20 million in arrears Zimbabwe owed Eskom. In addition, a new $75 million loan was extended to Zimbabwe to guarantee a basic minimum oil supply in the year ahead.[43] There is no prospect that the loan can be repaid. Such behavior can only be attributed to Mbeki's determination to keep Mugabe/Zanu-PF in power.

Mandela's Shadow

THE Zimbabwean opposition enjoys widespread sympathy from Britain, the United States and other Western countries, but none of these states wishes to offend Mbeki by adopting too forward a position over an issue in his backyard. In effect, this gives Mugabe a free hand as he mobilizes all his resources to crush the opposition before the presidential contest of March 2002. Mugabe, who will then be 78, is clearly determined to run again.

Why has Mbeki behaved as he has? Even the blowing up of the printing presses of Zimbabwe's independent *Daily News* on January 28 failed to trigger South African condemnation. The deputy foreign minister, Aziz Pahad, specifically said that South Africa did not wish to comment in a way that might seem critical of Mugabe—an incredible statement, for it assumed, as did everyone else, that Mugabe was guilty of the bombing. Similarly, the foreign minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, vigorously refused to criticize Zimbabwe over the expulsion of BBC and other foreign journalists.

As with his denial of the link between HIV and AIDS, Mbeki's support of Mugabe looks like a huge unforced error. The result has been enormous political damage at home and abroad, and it has wrought great economic damage as well. The IMF warned in December 2000 that the crisis risked pulling down the whole southern African region. There is no doubt that had Mbeki taken a firm stand, insisted that human rights and the rule of law were basic to any African Renaissance, he would have earned enormous respect at home, in Africa and abroad, and, in one bound, would have stepped out of Mandela's giant shadow. Indeed, he could have simply cut off fuel and electricity and brought Mugabe down, making himself a hero in Zimbabwe, too.

If one talks to official sources, one is told that Mbeki feels that he has little option but to support Mugabe because he provides the only viable government available, that if Mugabe falls, Zimbabwe could descend into Shona–Ndebele strife. Another standard line is that the Zimbabwean economy must be shored up because it is one of South Africa's most important trading partners, and because economic collapse would produce a vast flood of immigrants into South Africa. None of this makes much sense. Anyone familiar with contemporary Zimbabwe knows that ethnic strife is now a very unlikely scenario; the opinion surveys carried out by the Helen Suzman Foundation over the past several years repeatedly probed this question and found nothing worth reporting. As for economic col-

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lapse, this is exactly what Mugabe himself is producing. Almost any alternative would be bound to do better—and the flood of immigrants is already a reality.

One is also told that Mbeki, faced with radical opposition from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), is deeply aware that former President Kaunda of Zambia was ultimately toppled by a trade union-based opposition. If another African nationalist, this time a liberation leader next door, were to be toppled by a similar union-based movement like the MDC, this would enormously strengthen Cosatu's leverage and encourage it to float its own workers party. There is probably something to this. But it should be remembered that the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and Cosatu were close allies, which meant that Cosatu, along with South Africa's Communist Party, was warmly disposed toward Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU leader. Had Mbeki embraced the MDC and opposed Mugabe at the outset he would have won plaudits from the South African Left. Even now Cosatu and the Communist Party are uncomfortable at finding themselves, as a result of their alliance with the ANC, on the opposite side from persecuted farm workers, organized urban labor and township food rioters in Zimbabwe.

The real key to this question is to remember that South African policy toward Mugabe would clearly have been very different if Mandela were still president. In other words, there is nothing intrinsic in African nationalism that necessitates Mbeki's attitude; both men are ANC leaders, but Mandela is clearly revolted by human rights abuses, while Mbeki clearly is not.

What is the central difference between the two men? Without doubt it is that Mandela preached racial reconciliation within "the rainbow nation" while Mbeki has preached the doctrine of "the two nations, one rich and white and the other black and poor." Over and over again he has played the race card against his domestic opposition, has insisted that South Africa's greatest problem is not AIDS, poverty or unemployment—but racism. The strategy is clear: Mbeki is insecure in power and the "two nations" tactic isolates the opposition and makes any black who supports it a race traitor. Provided he can maintain racial solidarity and racial blocs, the ANC is bound to win simply because elections then become a form of ethnic census, with Africans constituting 75 percent of the electorate. Given that the ANC is failing very badly and openly on its promises to provide "a better life for all", beating a retreat back to racial politics seems a safe recourse.

This, in turn, explains why Mbeki has not been discouraged even by Mugabe's multiple betrayals. For domestic reasons Mbeki has decided that he cannot be on the side of white farmers against a black liberation leader. Now that he has played the game that way, he has not only created a constituency within South Africa that would criticize him if he let Mugabe fail, he would now have to admit that he, the ANC's foreign policy and diplomatic expert, has misjudged disastrously over his first real foreign policy challenge.

The problem is not just that Mbeki has sacrificed the whole human rights tradition of the anti-apartheid struggle to support Mugabe, but that Mugabe must eventually fail. He is 76, is leading his country to negative 10 percent growth, he harbors as a friend the Ethiopian Pol Pot, Mengistu Haile Mariam, he is bankrupt, he is execrated by world opinion, and he knows there is no way back. Betting on him is betting on a certain loser.

Mbeki has been able to get away with this folly only because Western states

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want to stay on his side at all costs. Some are so desperate to do so that they are even willing to find reasons to excuse Mbeki's policy on AIDS. Thus, Marina Ottaway of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace writes that Mbeki's stance on AIDS is "not an act of personal madness or deep ignorance" but "an act of frustration, a response to an international community that demands too much, offers too little and does not spare the criticism."[44] In practice, Mbeki's refusal to allow HIV-positive pregnant mothers or rape victims access to anti-retroviral drugs (which the manufacturers have offered for free) is killing over 50,000 African babies a year. Those who actually care about those babies or about human rights or about Zimbabwe will, in the end, come up with a different answer. □

Notes

[1]Rotberg, "Africa's Mess, Mugabe's Mayhem", *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2000), p. 61.

[2]Private communication.

[3]Ibid.

[4]*Sunday Independent* (Johannesburg), February 13, 2000.

[5]See R.W. Johnson, *Political Opinion in Zimbabwe 2000* (Johannesburg: Helen Suzman Foundation, March 2000), especially pp. 5-10.

[6]*The Citizen* (Johannesburg) and *Business Day* (Johannesburg), February 18, 2000.

[7]Ibid.

[8]*The Citizen*, March 29, 2000.

[9]*Business Day*, March 24, 2000.

[10]*Sunday Times Business News* (Johannesburg), December 17, 2000.

[11]*Business Day*, April 7, 2000.

[12]*Business Day* and *The Citizen*, April 10, 2000.

[13]*The Star* (Johannesburg), April 22, 2000.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Johnson, *Political Opinion in Zimbabwe 2000*, pp. 5-20.

[17]R.W. Johnson, *Political Opinion and the Crisis of Zimbabwe* (Johannesburg: Helen Suzman Foundation, November 2000), pp. 40-8.

[18]Ibid., pp. 68-82.

[19]*Sunday Independent*, April 30, 2000.

[20]*Business Day*, May 18, 2000.

[21]*The Citizen*, April 26, 2000.

[22]*Business Day*, *The Citizen* and *The Star*, May 2, 2000.

[23]*The Citizen*, May 5, 2000.

[24]*The Citizen*, May 6, 2000.

[25]*Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), May 7, 2000.

[26]Ibid.

[27]*Business Day*, May 10, 2000.

[28]See, for example, the article by Jovial Rantao, "A Zimbabwe Run from Sandton?", *The Star*, June 21, 2000.

[29]*The Citizen*, May 27, 2000. Hundreds of landless families in Kenya, clearly inspired by the Zimbabwean example, invaded farms in early May. They got short shrift.

[30]*The Citizen*, May 23, 2000. For the full flower of Mosisili's rhetoric, read Zimbabwe's state-owned press, especially the *Herald* (May 23, 2000) and the *Sunday Mail* (May 28, 2000).

[31]*Business Day*, May 28, 2000.

[32]*Business Day*, June 21, 2000.

[33]An investigation by the Helen Suzman Foundation suggested that the true number of voters registered was probably about 3,667,000, rather than the official figure of 5,049,815—that is, that the register was inflated by over 37 percent. See Johnson, *Political Opinion and the Crisis*, pp. 3-4.

[34]*The Star*, June 13, 2000.

[35]*The Citizen*, May 29, 2000.

[36]Author's interview with Graham McIntosh, a Democratic Party (South Africa) member of the delegation, Harare, June 27, 2000.

[37]*The Star*, May 31, 2000.

[38]*Business Day*, *The Citizen* and *The Star*, August 3, 2000.

[39]Ibid.

[40]*Business Day*, September 7, 2000.

[41]*Business Day*, September 11, 2000.

[42]*Business Day*, December 1, 2000.

[43]*The Star*, December 15, 2000.

[44]Cited in *Business Day*, January 3, 2001.

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From Miracle to Malaise

Southeast Asia Goes South

Peter Hartcher

WHILE most of the world celebrated the true arrival of the millennium with an explosion of carefully choreographed fireworks, the occasion was marked in two of the major nations of Southeast Asia with meticulously planned sequences of terrorist bombings. The eight deadly detonations in Indonesia and the five in the Philippines were timed and placed for maximum political impact. In Jakarta they were set off in churches in an effort to provoke a Muslim-Christian conflagration. In Manila explosions ripped apart buses and shopping malls in a campaign to foment a sense of national emergency. And in each case the terror campaigns were suspected of being organized not by some lunatic fringe but by a major power bloc in the national establishment that could think of no better way to unsettle political rivals. These bombings tolled the death of Southeast Asia as the world has known it for the past thirty years. They seem to be a suitable, if dreadful, declaration of the arrival of a new era, of the region's abrupt transition from miracle to malaise.

In 1960 Southeast Asia was as grim as sub-Saharan Africa—poor, unstable, violent. But by the early 1990s the region had become a shining symbol of hope for the improvement of the Third World, while most of sub-Saharan Africa remained a sad synonym for its hopelessness. Southeast Asia's main states became a showcase for economic advancement in the developing world, a case study in the ascendancy of democracy and capitalism, an object lesson in religious and ethnic tolerance. The region was also an exemplar of strategic stability. In 1967 five countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand—formed a stabilizing political bloc, durably anti-communist and pro-capitalist, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). After the Vietnam War and the triumph of communist Vietnam, the ASEAN states—the great bulk of the region—emerged as a bulwark against Marxist revolution. The dominoes stood firm. Not only did they refuse to tumble, they prospered.

In sum, the region became an economic, political and strategic lodestar, a significant asset for both the Third World and the West. When in 1996 the Singaporean diplomat-intellectual Kishore Mahbubani described the ASEAN experience as a kind of "magic", no one argued. The region, he waxed, "which has greater diversity of race, language, religion, culture etc. than the Balkans of Europe", had emerged as "one of the most peaceful and prosper-

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ous corners of the world." It was "a miracle of history."[1]

Miracles are not only rare; they can also be fleeting. Today—only five years later—when Southeast Asia is compared to the Balkans, it is not to draw a contrast but a parallel. Most regional economies are in disarray. They have emerged from the Asian economic crisis of 1997–98 not improved but enduringly impaired. The collective Southeast Asian economy is smaller today than it was before the crisis broke. Many dormant ethnic and religious resentments have exploded in violence. Democratic systems are under tremendous stress and a stinking tide of corruption is on the rise. The dominant regional power, Indonesia, has lost the territory of East Timor that it held by force of arms for twenty-four years and is in danger of further splintering in a process commonly invoked as Balkanization. The ASEAN grouping has lost the power of action and degenerated to the brink of meaninglessness. And, depressingly, the region is increasingly inclined to blame the West for its troubles.

The holiday bombs are a clear symptom and a timely signal that the world needs to reconsider this asset that is fast becoming a serious liability. How serious a liability? In a June 2000 speech to the Asian Development Forum, Tan Kong Yam, professor of business studies at the National University of Singapore, suspected that, as the rich United States has the poor, crisis-prone Latin America at its feet, the dynamic economies of North Asia will succeed while the poorer nations of Southeast Asia lapse into a long-term, Latin-style stagnation:

> Like Latin America, South-East Asia could gravitate towards being poor and prone to periodic crisis for the next ten years. The effects of weak growth could compound with political difficulties to create the same downward cycle that occurred in Latin America in the 1980s.

The crucial question must now be whether the sharp deterioration is a temporary relapse, or whether it was the quarter century of gains that was the aberration. Were those years, like most apparent "miracles", really just an effervescence? Is Southeast Asia merely returning to form as a Third World trouble spot? If so, it would become a truly worrisome one. For the last quarter century the world has been spared the need to pay much attention to the region because things have been, by and large, going right. But as things go wrong, what is at stake will emerge more starkly.

First, the region is economically important. Forty percent of all world shipping passes through Indonesia's straits, making them a vital global choke point. This includes about 80 percent of the oil that fuels Japan's economy, the world's second-biggest. Indonesia and the neighboring sultanate of Brunei are themselves significant oil exporters. The region is home to a large slice of Japan's lower value-added industrial structure. It has been a contributor to the cause of global market opening; ASEAN has its own plan for an intra-region free-trade area and it has signed up to a larger pan-Pacific free-trade plan too. All of these commitments now totter in the balance.

Second, Southeast Asia is strategically important. Just as it was a bar to the encroachment of communism during the Cold War, today it could be a strategic counter to China's ambitions in the South China Sea. China has territorial disputes with Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam and Brunei over rival claims to tiny islands and vast tracts of seabed in the

[1]The original article, "The ASEAN Magic", was first published in the Japanese Foreign Ministry journal, *Gaiko Forum*, in April 1996, and Mahbubani's elaborations are contained in his book, *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1998), pp. 14, 157-65.

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putatively resource-rich region. All but Brunei have built some sort of military outposts on the islands to emphasize the point. In the last few years, Beijing has been prepared to discuss these claims, but it has not yielded on any of them. Although the ASEAN states want to negotiate *en bloc* with China to increase their bargaining power, Beijing has insisted on bilateral discussions or no discussions at all. In the words of an authority on international boundaries, "In terms of the number and complexity of overlapping jurisdictional and sovereignty claims made to it, the South China Sea is probably the most disputed place on earth."[2] Indonesia, in particular, is wary of China's intentions to extend its territorial ambit southward. China has unilaterally drawn a line on the map to encompass an expanse of sea that loops so far south as to include part of the vast Indonesian-claimed West Natuna gas discovery. Beijing has assured Indonesia that it has no territorial dispute with Jakarta. Still, the Indonesians pointedly staged the biggest naval exercises in the country's history in the vicinity. Last November, China offered ASEAN a free-trade agreement, a further part of its medium-term efforts to enlarge its regional influence.

Third, in world politics, ideology and religion, the region can be a disproportionately powerful force—for good or for ill—through its bearing on two of the world's most influential doctrines: Islam and democracy. Indonesia is the world's most populous Islamic country, and the world's fourth-most populous democracy. At the moment, democracy and Islam coexist in the vast archipelago, but it is still an early and uneasy moment in a grand experiment. During the thirty-two year reign of General Suharto, both doctrines were carefully controlled and limited by the secular, authoritarian president and his army. In the last two years, liberated from Suharto's restraining hand, both have been testing their new freedom. But by their very existence both also challenge the power of the army in a struggle yet to be resolved. Paul Wolfowitz, former U.S. ambassador to Jakarta and now deputy secretary of defense in the Bush administration, argued last year that a successful Indonesian transition to democracy would not only be a valuable example to Muslim countries around the world, but "as the biggest democracy in East Asia it would also be a none-too-subtle influence on China." The West, he believed, had an "extraordinary opportunity" to help cement the world's biggest Muslim country as a democracy. The peace and stability of the entire region was at stake:

> There is a real danger Indonesia will start to fragment. It occupies such a huge and strategic position I think that, unfortunately, you will see big and small powers scrapping over the pieces. I am not predicting it's going to be another Yugoslavia—but then again I don't know anyone who predicted Yugoslavia three years before it went bad.[3]

The Region Divides

IN THE 1997 ranking of the 100 richest people in Asia, fully 60 were Southeast Asians. All but one—the sultan of Brunei—were based in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand or Singapore. They needed at least $1 billion to make the list. This was a pretty remarkable achievement—these economies made up less than one-sixth of the continent's collective economic weight, yet yielded 60 percent of its wealthiest tycoons. Then the Asian eco-

[2]Clive Schofield, "A Code of Conduct for the South China Sea?", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 1, 2000.

[3]Author's interview with Wolfowitz, quoted in the *Australian Financial Review*, August 9, 2000.

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nomic crisis struck. It was brief but brutal. When the region had been declared to be well on the way to recovery, a revised list of Asia's biggest billionaires was compiled. It was striking to see in 2000 that of the top 100 billionaires only 37 were from the southeast. The region had produced a disproportionate number of ultra-rich, and now it bore a disproportionate share of their dissipation. Altogether, 28 Asian tycoons had been so savaged by the crisis that they failed to reappear in the rankings; of these, 23 were from the countries of the continent's southeast.[4]

The fate of the billionaires illustrates three points. First, much of Southeast Asia's prosperity was transient. It was lost to the crisis and has not been regained. The crisis was not just a cyclical event; it has changed the structure of the regional economy. Second, it is another sign of the trend that Professor Tan fears—the growing divergence between the Southeast Asian economies and the larger economies of Northeast Asia, and the consequent "Latinization" of the region as it falls behind. Third, it draws attention to three fundamental problems of Southeast Asian capitalism: its benefits were too highly concentrated in the hands of too few; those few were too dependent on state concessions and favors for their wealth; and most of the billionaires were ethnic Chinese in a sea of Malays.

All of this helps explain why the region is asking hard questions about capitalism and free markets. Perhaps the most difficult part of the entire economic crisis for Southeast Asia was the sheer unexpectedness of it. The region had become accustomed to endless growth. And its achievements were genuinely impressive. In 1960 an Indonesian could expect a life span three years shorter than that of a citizen of India, and he could expect to be 20 percent hungrier. By the 1990s he could expect to live two years longer and eat 20 percent more than his contemporaries from the subcontinent.[5]

There was a sense that continuous improvements were automatic, that these countries' status was unshakeable. The World Bank's 1993 report, *The East Asian Miracle*, lauded eight "high-performing Asian economies", including three in Southeast Asia—Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. "If growth were randomly distributed, there is roughly one chance in ten thousand that success would have been so regionally concentrated", the bank marveled. The global investment community bought into an East Asian miracle: the only question was whether to invest in a Northeast Asian tiger or a Southeast Asian dragon.

Until the crisis struck, East Asia was largely undifferentiated. Apart from the notable exception of Japan, all the main economies, whether in the north or south, were booming, all growing at rates of between 6 and 10 percent. "At that time, no one paid too much attention to politics—it was basically get in there and load up your boots", says Nicholas Bibby, a regional economist for the investment bank UBS Warburg. Until the very last moment, the independent arbiters of the international system could not see a problem. For instance, as late as June 17, 1997—just two weeks before the crisis erupted on July 2—Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), praised one of the front-line victims of the crisis, Malaysia. In the same year, the World Competitiveness Yearbook ranked Malaysia as the second-most competitive economy in the world after the United States.

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[4]See Geoff Hiscock, *Asia's New Wealth Club* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2000), especially pp. 13-16 and 314-15.

[5]"Emerging Asia: Changes and Challenges" (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), p. 275.

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By 1998 the group of countries that had been growing at rates of 6 to 10 percent was atomizing and the pieces were flying in completely different directions. Indonesia and Thailand shrank by a breathtaking 10 percent or more. Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea contracted at less shocking rates. Taiwan and Singapore showed some growth. China grew at a powerful 8 percent. Across the group, the growth divergence had blown out from 4 percentage points to 21 in just two years. With every passing month since, the bifurcation of the East Asian miracles has become clearer—and the southeastern group as a whole is falling behind.

The shock across all Asia was profound. But it was in Southeast Asia, where the protective cushion of wealth was thinnest and the quality of institutions poorest, that the effects were harshest, the resentment sharpest, and the enduring problems most serious. Before the crisis broke in July 1997, private research for the ASEAN secretariat warned of a problem with the region's competitiveness. But it was widely believed that the crisis, though savage, would impose the cure. It would snap fixed exchange rates and force big devaluations, and it would purge inefficient firms and banks. The spectacular collapse of the regional economy in 1997–98 did leave a detritus of vast bad debt in banks and companies; the problem is that despite some progress most of the bad debt is still there. The purge did not occur. Post-crisis restructuring has been so inadequate that some analysts argue it will take a second crisis to restore health to the Southeast Asian banking and corporate sectors. In short, a prime opportunity has been lost.

Three years after the crisis first struck, the World Bank, at one time the chief cheerleader of the East Asian economic miracle, issued a new and sober assessment in its 2000 publication, *East Asia, Recovery and Beyond*: "The crisis has left two legacies: heavy debt and greater household insecurity. It has also left the region more vulnerable to external shocks." Indeed, the burden of bank debt in these countries is truly crippling. According to UBS Warburg, as a proportion of their economies the debt is bigger than it was in Japan at the peak of its banking crisis, or in the United States at the worst of the Savings & Loan disaster. In the most severely afflicted country, Indonesia, the central bank itself last year was pronounced bankrupt. Its governor awaits trial on charges of corruptly paying vast amounts of the central bank's money to assist banks owned by cronies of former President Suharto.

Another major concern about the state of post-crisis Southeast Asia is that the public sector has been left owning much more of the economy than it did before the crisis. The World Bank calculates that the Malaysian government now owns a fifth of all bank assets in the country; the Thai government owns a third; and the Indonesian authorities hold 78 percent. A former professor of public policy at Stanford University, Hilton Root, now at the Milken Institute, points out:

> These economies are now crisis-prone. The worst often comes three to four years after the initial crisis. Companies have enough cash flow to function but not enough for new investment. The banking system is broke and can't lend enough for investment either. So in three or four years, firms find they have fallen behind. In Latin America, there was a big crisis in 1982. But the worst effects didn't appear at the company level until four years later.[6]

The economists at Credit Lyonnais Securities (Asia) made their own assessment of whether the region could lapse

[6]Quoted in the *Australian Financial Review*, June 19, 2000.

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into crisis all over again. They drew up a scorecard to measure the structural propensity of Asian economies to make dud investments. As a benchmark, they used Japan on the eve of its disastrous period of massive mal-investment known as the Bubble Economy. The results? They found that seven Asian economies were today similarly—or even more ruinously—inclined to channel good money into bad investments. The vulnerable included Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines—four of the five main economies of Southeast Asia. The firm's specialist on Southeast Asia, Anthony Nafte, summarized key investor concerns:

> In Malaysia, companies still look to the Government to decide where to invest. And the exchange rate is pegged at a level which is artificially low. In effect, it's a subsidy being used to prop companies up. In Thailand, the ratio of non-performing loans in the banking system is getting worse, not better. And it's about to get much worse. In the Philippines, people . . . just lost faith in President Estrada. And Indonesia has deep political and economic problems.[7]

Professor Tan explains his dismal thesis for the Latinization of Southeast Asia. He has three main concerns: First, "The South-East Asian boom of the past was driven by Japanese investment. The region was getting 30 to 50 percent of [its] foreign direct investment from Japan. The Japanese relocation of productive capacity to the region was the spearhead of South-East Asia's industrialisation. But this Japanese investment will not be there for the next 10 years." Second, "Chinese competition has asserted itself. There will be a 'passdown' of industry relocating from Korea and Hong Kong to lower-cost countries, but it will go to China—not to South-East Asia. At the same time you have Mexico, with the benefit of NAFTA, as a very strong competitor. You have a new competitive landscape." Third, "South-East Asia is relatively weak in all the key indicators—expenditure on research and development, internet penetration, and so on."[8]

Indeed, a report prepared for ASEAN last November showed China attracting 61 percent of all new foreign direct investment in emerging Asia, with Southeast Asia getting only 17 percent. This is the opposite of the situation a decade earlier. Southeast Asia succeeded in the decades from 1960 to 1997 chiefly by exporting low value-added manufactures, but, as China conquers market after market in this area, it may be that the region's success was only a sort of reprieve. Since China launched its pro-market reforms under Deng Xiaoping in 1978, it has increasingly asserted competitive advantage as a low-cost manufacturer. With lower wages, better trained workers and superior infrastructure, Chinese products continue gradually to displace those of Southeast Asia from shop shelves around the world. A decade ago China's economy was smaller than the collective economy of Southeast Asia. Today it is almost twice as big.[9]

Liberated from the yoke of colonial occupation, the newly independent states of Southeast Asia struggled through the challenge of communism in

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[7]Credit Lyonnais Securities (Asia), "Asia's Dismal Decade", *Emerging Markets* (May 2000); and Nafte as quoted in the *Australian Financial Review*, June 20, 2000.

[8]Quoted in the *Australian Financial Review*, June 20, 2000.

[9]China's nominal GDP in 1999 was $996 billion. That of the big five ASEAN economies was $509 billion (Indonesia's was $143 billion, Thailand's $125 billion, Singapore's $85 billion, Malaysia's $79 billion, the Philippines' $77 billion). This makes China 195 percent the size of ASEAN.

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the 1960s. The region then entered a period of apprehensiveness and instability as it launched into nation-building; then growing confidence as it succeeded; then complacency and self-congratulation as it began to believe its own promotional rhetoric. Hubris came next. With the arrival of the economic crisis of 1997–98, it was plunged into shock, anger and bitterness. Southeast Asia after the crisis is seething with frustration and resentment. The real question, perhaps, is whether the region's economic disappointments will scar its political achievements.

Democracy's Chances

THERE IS a case for believing that democracy is making itself at home in Southeast Asia. Britain left Singapore and Malaysia with parliamentary systems, and they kept them. They elect their governments to this day. The people of Thailand and the Philippines struggled free of authoritarian regimes. They seemed to be textbook cases of countries where rising living standards created rising political expectations. It happened in fits and starts, but it happened—and almost bloodlessly. Then the Indonesians overthrew Suharto. Here it was not a case of rising living standards but the abrupt interruption of rising living standards that provoked the change. Although it had not held a genuine election since the 1950s, Indonesia managed to conduct a peaceful and fair ballot across its vast archipelago of 3,000 inhabited islands with some 100 million voters. And, despite the profusion of 36 political parties, the result was declared with considerably greater dispatch than the U.S. presidential election of 2000.

It seems, then, that the trend for the region over the last thirty years has been positive, and with the transformation of Indonesia, all five of the original member states of ASEAN are now democratic. Maybe Francis Fukuyama was right about "the end of history." Maybe the critics, arguing that Southeast Asians lack the maturity to choose their own leaders, were horribly wrong. Of course, other regional countries remain in authoritarian hands, but the trend has been positive and overwhelmingly so. Myanmar (Burma) is the only country that seems to have retreated indefinitely from an experiment in democracy.

But deeper analysis shows that there is no room for complacency. The original democracies, Singapore and Malaysia, have the mechanics of elections to choose governments, but not the liberal values and systems that give elections meaning. Singapore's ruling party has successfully repressed political opposition by using a compliant court system to sue opponents into financial bankruptcy and political oblivion. Malaysia has gutted its court system to ensure that the government gets its way. Both countries control and censor their media. They are both systems of illiberal democracy or soft authoritarianism. Thailand and the Philippines are countries where democracy was achieved, lost and then recovered. Both struggle against deeply entrenched corruption and both, in recent times, have elected worryingly corrupt leaders. This has consequences for the durability of democracy in these states.

First, the Philippines. After a decade of impressive reform under the honest competency of President Fidel Ramos, aptly nicknamed "Steady Eddie", Filipinos voted to replace him with a semi-literate drunkard and crook, the former movie tough guy Joseph Estrada. In the meantime, the armed Muslim separatist movement in the country's south, brought in check by the Ramos government, revived. Anyone can make a mistake. But when the country realized its

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error two years later, the constitutional procedure for impeaching and removing Estrada broke down. The Catholic Church, and finally the army, intervened decisively to force him from office without due process. It turned out that the army and not the constitution was the ultimate source of authority. This episode had echoes of the 1986 removal of the corrupt authoritarian Ferdinand Marcos. It raises deep questions about the quality and durability of Filipino democracy.

Next, Thailand. Again, the people have freely elected a man under suspicion of serious corruption, a billionaire tycoon. Thaksin Shinawatra, elected on January 6, is a clever nationalist who has tapped his people's lingering resentment of the country's harsh treatment by the IMF. Thaksin found an easy way to win the rural vote, which dominates Thai politics—he bought it. He is a naked populist who offered a grant of $23,000 to each of Thailand's 70,000 villages if elected. He also promised to impose a three-year moratorium on farmers' interest payments. He was once foreign minister, but was forced from office by allegations of conflict of interest. Now Thaksin is under investigation for concealing $232 million in assets and for failing to pay taxes, which, he says, he "forgot" to do. The country's National Counter Corruption Commission charged him in December—before the election—and has said it will rule on the case within a year. If convicted, the law says he must quit public office for five years. This could pose a serious constitutional and political challenge for Thailand. "It has the potential", observes political scientist Sunai Phasuk of Chulalongkorn University, "to become a very chaotic situation."

Meanwhile, in the biggest country and newest democracy of Southeast Asia, the political system is in an extremely parlous condition. Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, a blind and eccentric Muslim cleric and mystic, is under parliamentary scrutiny for corruption. He is also manifestly failing to restore the economy or administration of the country. Indonesia started to fragment the moment Suharto stepped down. Jakarta allowed East Timor, annexed by Indonesian troops in 1975, to vote its future. Its people chose independence. But a vengeful Indonesian army sponsored an orgy of militia killing. Australian troops led a UN-mandated international force to expel the militia killers.

Other provinces of Indonesia are now clamoring for independence. Irian Jaya, also known as Papua, and Aceh in northern Sumatra are agitating with particular vigor; but here Jakarta has responded not with ballots but with bullets. The nationalists in the government, and the army in particular, are determined that there should be no more sundering of the country's territory. In the meantime, ethnic and religious fighting, held in check under the thirty-two years of Suharto's rule, rampages sporadically and uncontrollably on the periphery of the Javanese empire. The army, pushed to the periphery by the new democratic structures, is keenly awaiting the failure of Indonesia's second experiment with democracy. Indeed, the army's impatience is evident. According to President Wahid, the police investigation into the church bombings that killed fifteen people and injured over one hundred has named a faction of the army as the chief suspect.

In all these countries, and in varying degrees, democracy, superficially in such robust health, is in fact in fundamental jeopardy. It will be the work of at least another generation to improve the quality and hence the durability of democratic systems and principles where they now exist in Southeast Asia, and probably many generations to extend them to the countries where they do not exist.

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Frozen in the Headlights

WITH THE economies and governments of the region under such stress, it is natural that their key collective identity, ASEAN, should also be under stress. And it is. It did serve its original purpose in resisting communism. But it is now failing every significant challenge it faces. In a moment of excitement a few years ago, the foreign minister of one of its members, Singapore's Professor S. Jayakumar, declared that, "We want a Southeast Asia whose future will be determined by Southeast Asians—not by others in faraway capitals."

ASEAN's first big failure was its utter impotence in the face of the Asian economic crisis. This was a humiliation of monumental proportions. When economic collapse approached, ASEAN froze in the oncoming headlights. Individual governments and the organization as a whole became helpless victims, as Thailand and then Indonesia faced international insolvency and dragged the region into recession. Who stepped in to deal with the crisis? Others in faraway capitals, chiefly the twin sisters from Washington, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The other big player was Tokyo.

ASEAN's second big failure was its response to the crisis in East Timor. When the killing started in Dili, the regional body stood mute and inert. "East Timor became ASEAN's millstone", argue Leonard Sebastian and Anthony Smith from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore,

> when the association failed to speak up and stop the rampage ASEAN's inaction at the start of the crisis surrendered the moral and political high ground to Australia. [Its voice] may no longer be credible when it calls for Asian solutions to Asian problems.

Again, the solution came from others in faraway capitals—from Canberra and from the UN headquarters in New York, under pressure from Washington.

The third serious failure emerged starkly last November—in trade policy. The leaders of ASEAN started to backslide on the organization's only really ambitious project, the creation of a free-trade area. Malaysia's Mahathir demanded and won a special new exemption from the plan, under which about 85 percent of trade between ASEAN's members was to be freed from tariffs by 2002. This was to include cars and car parts. But Mahathir wants to protect his indigenous car project, the Proton, which today lazes under the shelter of tariffs as high as 300 percent. This angers Thailand, the self-proclaimed "Detroit of the East", host to world-class Toyota, Ford and BMW assembly plants.

So ASEAN has failed to deal with an economic crisis, failed to do anything in the face of a security crisis, and now is failing to manage its own programs of trade liberalization. His ideal in tatters, Professor Jayakumar has conceded that ASEAN looks feeble: "We may not like these perceptions of ASEAN as ineffective and a sunset organisation, but they are political facts."

Why is it in such grave difficulty? Without a strong president in Indonesia, ASEAN is leaderless. With political uncertainty in two of its other major members, Thailand and the Philippines, its most important members are distracted. Enfeebled by the financial crisis, it is economically weak. Under competitive challenge from a rising China, its confidence is shaky. And with the recent entry of four new members—Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—any semblance of unity is impossible.

Like the world's investors, the Singaporean government has drawn the conclusion that it will not put its full faith

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in the future of ASEAN. Singapore is striking out with bilateral free-trade agreements with anyone who might be interested—the United States, Japan, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand. It is for this reason that Singapore's supreme strategist—the former prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew—last November proposed a new regional trade grouping: ASEAN, plus the three big Northeast Asian economies of Japan, China and South Korea, plus Australia and New Zealand. Lee knows that if Singapore wants any sort of dynamism, it will not find it in ASEAN.

A Japanese academic once compared ASEAN to a salad in the affairs of the wider Asia-Pacific: a valuable side dish, but not essential to sustaining life. Today it is starting to smell like a salad that has been left out in the sun for too long. The first rays of the new millennium's dawn over Southeast Asia illuminate a grim scene. But there is nothing predetermined about the region's present state of disarray, no inevitability about its decline into "Latinization." Its successes were man-made, and so are its failures. Its salvation, if it is to have one, will lie in energetically building, not madly bombing, its own future. □

It's Not Just the French

Only this week the U.S. Commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet wrote in our press what we should do for our security. We are not yet a U.S. province. That a U.S. Commander-in-Chief felt able or obliged to make such comments is indicative of the inequality of the relationship.

We need to make sure that when our own Defence Review is being implemented that it is designed to maximise Australia's capacity to meet our own strategic objectives and that it is not designed merely to complement something that may be required of us by the United States. It would be an act of lunacy for Australia to participate in a conflict between China and America over Taiwan. If those demands have been made of us, as Tim Fischer [then Deputy Prime Minister] has so clearly enunciated, they have presumably also been made of Japan. I could imagine no venture more foolhardy for either country. . . .

Going the American way would be much too high a price to pay for what is left of ANZUS.

—Malcolm Fraser, Australian prime minister from 1975 to 1983, and a staunch friend of the United States during the Cold War, speaking in November 2000

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China and the Historians

Charles Horner

THROUGHOUT the second half of the twentieth century, the study of modern China was informed by a "master narrative" whose climax was the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. All roads seemed to lead to Beijing's famous Tiananmen Square and Chairman Mao's proclamation of China's new order. Of course, the historian cannot but tell the story this way, for he surely knows that this is how China's political struggles during the first half of the twentieth century resolved themselves. In this respect, the student of modern China is not much different from his fellows who are interested in other parts of the world; no matter any historian's claim that he seeks to understand the past on its own terms, his work is always conducted in full knowledge of how things actually turned out. He becomes a determinist *de facto*, reading consequences back into causes, even as he struggles against it.

And yet new interpretations, reinterpretations and syntheses do appear. Sometimes, without anyone's planning it or even desiring it, the rewriting and reworking of history can provide a new framework for the consideration of contemporary questions. When the subject is a relatively exotic place like China—whose story is not very well known to begin with—the time lag inherent in this process will be that much greater than normal, and a change in the focus of even the attentive public will take that much longer. To this, one must add the ladylike and gentlemanly pace at which the study of China progresses, a reflection of the difficulty of the subject matter, but also a legacy of the careful, deliberate and unhurried way in which the Chinese themselves have studied their own history. And again, we must remember that conditions inside China during the past century and a half have hardly been conducive to the Western or Chinese study of the country's modern history. Inside, chaos and political repression have inhibited the work; outside, foreigners have been constrained by these obstacles—and by a few of their own making, as well.

This said, during the past twenty years, at least three important trends in the investigation and presentation of modern Chinese history have been altering our view of contemporary China—and will therefore influence our stance toward it. There has been, first of all, a profound and revolutionary change under way in interpreting China's last dynasty, the Qing (1644–1912), with important implications for our understanding of the very meaning of even fundamental terms like

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"China" and "Chinese." There is also a comparable revisiting of the history of the first half of the twentieth century, focused more on comprehending both the complex China and the "greater China" we see before us today, rather than the Maoist China that monopolized our vision for so long. And there is a demographic change in progress: the previously dominant position of non-Chinese sinologists in the study and teaching of China around the world is gradually shrinking as greater numbers of Chinese, whether inside or outside of China, whether citizens of China or of other countries, become involved.

Manchus and Chinese: Whose Great Enterprise?

IN February 1912, Prince Chun, the regent acting on behalf of his five year-old son, the emperor of China, executed an instrument of abdication whereby the last Chinese dynasty came to an end. The Qing ("Ch'ing" in the older system of Romanization) dynasty had begun in 1644. It was not the creation of Chinese at all, but the work of a hitherto obscure inner Asian people, the Manchus, who had gradually come to prominence beyond the Great Wall. In the traditional Chinese sense of things, the Manchus' decision to attempt "the Great Enterprise"—that is, the conquest of all of China—was momentous, but far from unprecedented. Non-Chinese dynasties—dynasties of conquest, as they are styled—had governed China for about half its history. The one most familiar to us was created by the Mongols, whose dynasty was known to the Chinese as the Yuan (1260–1348); the emperor of China during Marco Polo's visit, Kublai Khan, was one of these Mongol rulers, a grandson of Genghis. Between the collapse of the Mongols and the ascendancy of the Manchus, China had been governed by the wholly home-grown Ming dynasty, whose rule began in 1368 and lasted for some 275 years.

The decay and decomposition of the Ming house, and how its empire was acquired by the previously unheralded Manchu invaders, is one of the great tales of Chinese history. It is the stuff not only of legend and literature. Chinese resistance to the gradual consolidation of Manchu rule throughout the country created a powerful political tradition of its own, for the Manchu ascendancy raised fundamental issues of loyalty and legitimacy for common folk and elites alike. The relatively tiny number of Manchu outsiders had to perfect a complex strategy of co-optation and intimidation, and then develop a governing style that would hold together their hard-won holdings. How they did this, who owed what to whom, and how to reconcile the initial grand successes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the catastrophic collapse of the nineteenth century—these issues of historical analysis have informed the debates about Chinese politics for the past century and a half.

How "Chinese" was Manchu-era China? That is the nub of the matter. Some Chinese who turned against the dynasty at its end for its failure to fend off the onslaught of the Western barbarians concluded that the country had been betrayed by the Manchus. They argued that, whatever their degree of "Chineseness", the Manchus were of a different race, and, therefore, were willing to collaborate with white imperialists against the interests of the Chinese *as a people* in order to protect "China" as a Manchu *imperial possession*. This racial aspect of things also served in some ways to further discredit the entire Confucian imperial idea as inherently opposed to the interests of the Chinese as a people; it fed the argument for junking the imperial system itself and substituting a modern republic in its place. The curious combination of revived

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racial consciousness (stoked by the "Social Darwinism" of the late nineteenth century), recollections of Ming dynasty loyalism, and different strands of Western political thought all came together in the anti-dynastic, pro-republican movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, famously led by Sun Yat-sen.

On the other hand, there was no denying the greatness of prior Manchu achievements. These had been known throughout East Asia, and also to literate Europeans from the reports of Catholic missionaries who had actually witnessed and described with great insight and detail the last days of Ming rule, and who had then over time gained important positions in the Qing court. Western sinology began here, and it was the inspiration for the West's future fascination with *chinoiserie* in all its forms. The sixty-year reign of Kangsi (1662–1722) and the equally long reign of his grandson, Qianlong (1736–96), are arguably the most successful political tenures in the history of the country—perhaps even in the history of the world. The Chinese themselves once knew about the expansion, prosperity, regional hegemony and cultural efflorescence of Qing-era China, and were proud of it and their own role in it. While that memory was dimmed by subsequent humiliations and disasters, the more the Chinese have recovered from the shock of Western intrusion, the more prepared they have been to acknowledge Qing achievements.

Nor has it been so hard to square this particular circle. For many years, received historical interpretation had attributed Manchu successes to "sinicization", that is, to a long-established process whereby various aliens became "Chinese." Among Chinese, it was thus possible to have it both ways—that the Manchus were both "Chinese" and "not Chinese" at one and the same time, depending, of course, on how the country was faring under Manchu tutelage.

This is not a debating point or a merely theoretical matter; it is a fundamental geographical one, a nation-defining one. The Republic of China that replaced the Qing dynasty was pleased to include in the new country all of "China", that is, all of China proper as the Manchus found it, plus the doubling of the size of the realm as they left it. For China as *we* know it is more or less China as the Manchus created it. To the historic Han core of the country they added Manchuria, Mongolia and Tibet—as well as Xinjiang, an additional 600,000 square miles (more than three times the size of France) of "new territories" in the far northwest. Indeed, the western half of the country today is sparsely populated, and by non-Han Chinese. It is these peoples—Turkic Muslims in the northwest, Buddhists in Tibet, for example—whose place in today's People's Republic of China is highly problematic. The place of Taiwan, another Qing addition of the late seventeenth century, is of course even more contentious.

There is a growing argument among historians about what history as such can teach us about these issues. The traditional way of imagining "China"—culturally coherent in its "sinicization", politically coherent in its "Confucianism", governmentally coherent in its "mandarinate", and geographically coherent as "one country"—is now challenged by new notions, the results of careful re-examination of the Manchu era and the theory and practice of Manchu governance. Indeed, the rise of "Manchu studies" is in itself a powerful indicator that China as we have known it need not be China at all.

To try to condense two decades of academic debate among a relatively small number of well-informed specialists will probably disconcert all parties to the discussion. On the other hand, our purpose here is well enough served by rather arbi-

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trarily referring to but two of the many relevant works of scholarship that have appeared in the past two decades. In this way, the argument can be more conveniently bracketed.

About fifteen years ago, Professor Beatrice Bartlett of Yale, taking advantage of greater access to China-housed archives in the wake of the post-Mao liberalization, analyzed a parallel set of Qing-era governmental records, these written in the Manchu language, not in Chinese. This allowed her to argue for a different way of understanding the system of imperial governance; Manchu rulers were quite self-consciously neither "Chinese" nor the captives of a venerable Chinese-dominated bureaucracy. Instead, they had an agenda of their own and knew what they were doing to implement it.

This notion of a Manchu self-consciousness could, of course, be analyzed in various ways, and one comprehensive analysis will serve to form the other bracket to the argument. The analysis appeared at the end of the twentieth century in the work of Professor Pamela Crossley of Dartmouth.[1] In her view, there was a well-wrought Manchu imperial ideology that departed in many ways from the inherited Chinese one. In particular, the emperor himself, though he may have displayed a sinified face to his Chinese subjects, did not pretend either to himself or to his many other, non-Chinese subjects that he was Chinese. The enlargement of the empire was therefore not understood at all as the enlargement of China, but, rather, as the accretion of ever more and diverse holdings within a Manchu imperial portfolio. Thus, the emperors did not, on principle, pursue the sinification of newly acquired possessions, but instead respected their traditions and often represented themselves as somehow belonging to one or another of those diverse traditions rather than to the Chinese one. Indeed, the various parts of the Manchu empire developed a loyalty to the emperors seated in Beijing precisely because they viewed them not as the embodiment of an expansion of Chinese influence, but as something quite the reverse: For these outliers, the Manchu emperors were a bulwark

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[1]The best summary of the issues and the literature is provided by Evelyn Rawski, herself an important pioneer in this work. As incoming president of the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) she devoted her presidential address to the subject, and it was reprinted as "Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History", *Journal of Asian Studies* (November 1996). The work of Bartlett discussed here is *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). The seminal book by Crossley is *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

The debate about all this is growing in intensity, and is not without some irony. A generation ago, the most eminent and knowledgeable authority on this era, Professor Ping-ti Ho, began the debate with a ground-breaking article about Qing achievements, "The Significance of the Ch'ing Period in Chinese History", itself based on his own presidential address to the AAS in 1967, and published in the association's journal later that year. For this, he was roundly criticized by some of his *confrères* for being too sympathetic to the Manchus, and worse. From his retirement, however, he rejoined the discussion more than three decades later, publishing "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing'", *Journal of Asian Studies* (February 1998).

But then, China is an old country and the relation between the Han and the non-Han has figured in China's understanding of itself for a very long time—as Benjamin Elman instructs early on in his monumental *A Cultural History of Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

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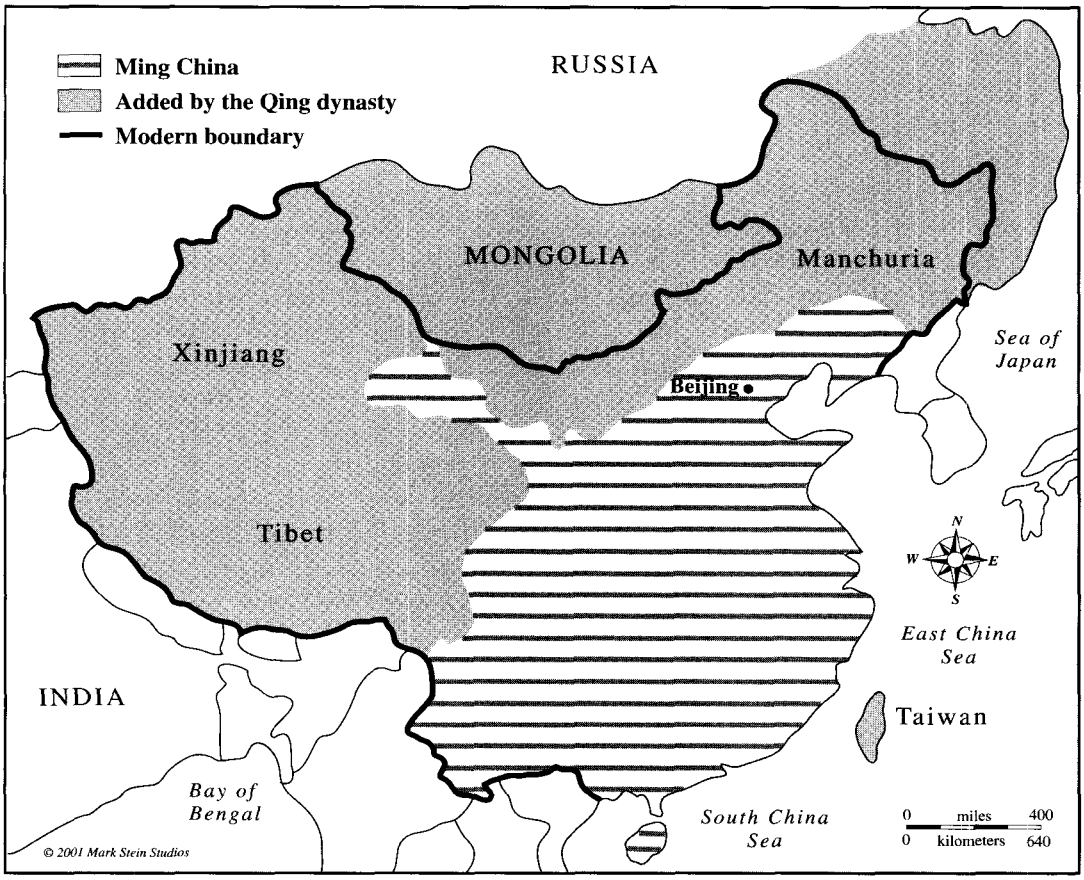

against Han domination, not the agent of it.

Is this how it "really" was? The question remains unsettled, but the argument by itself has already given us a new way of looking at the governance of "China" at the time of its greatest size, wealth, power and standing in the world. It is a way of comprehending the governance of this vast land mass that presupposes a genuinely cosmopolitan outlook, one that is tolerant and ecumenical and, most of all, *successful.* Translated into the language of contemporary politics, it implies something akin to federalism, devolution and pluralism, new political words to be sure, but now legitimated by the splendors of a great historical epoch. It thus becomes possible to imagine a high tradition of political thought and practice, properly understood, that can be placed at the service of the requirements for the effective governance of a modern state of growing wealth, power and standing. Indeed, it also becomes possible to argue that this newly rediscovered model of "tolerance" and "diversity" and "decentralization" may be the only effective template for a twenty-first century system that can hold China together and preserve its civil peace.

How Modern Is Modern?

JUST AS close scrutiny of the details of a now-defunct imperial system can yield a new understanding of the "traditional", a comparable re-examination of the first half of the twentieth century invites us to consider a new understanding of the "modern." In one sense, the received view of the meaning of Chinese modernity tracks the

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ensuing life of that forlorn child whose throne disappeared in 1912. In due course, he became the subject of a highly regarded and commercially successful film, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*. In one of its scenes, the former Son of Heaven expresses to his British tutor a desire to be part of the modern world that His Majesty knows exists outside the walls of the Forbidden City, though he is weak on the details. He wants to learn to drive a car and to dance the two-step. His first empress suggests that their initial intimate encounter be adjourned with a handshake—as a "modern couple" might end their first date. He learns to play tennis.

We now know, of course, that neither the last emperor nor his country would experience modernity as a series of such leisurely and pleasant experiences. Rather, both lived through the chaos of warlordism and economic collapse, then of protracted and destructive war with Japan, then the resumption of civil war between Nationalists and Communists, then imprisonment in a Maoist madhouse. The last emperor died in 1967, after "reigning" as Japan's puppet in Manchukuo, then spending the years between 1945 and 1959 under Soviet house arrest and in a Chinese prison camp, and finally ending up tending plants in a Beijing botanical garden.

To return to Beijing (better, Shanghai) today is to wonder whether things have returned to square one. It is too simple-minded to say that the country has somehow wholly reverted to its pre-communist *modus operandi* and overall affect, and yet the communist China supposedly gestating in the preceding two centuries of "modern China" is not much in evidence either. Viewed narrowly as an issue in China studies, it is certainly fair to say that, beginning in 1950, what we wanted to know about was the origin of the PRC. Thus, things that happened between 1900 and 1950 mattered to the degree that they prefigured the Maoist victory and its social and political vision. But today nothing remains of any of that, and whatever the claims put forward for it at the time, nobody nowadays pays any attention to the earth-shaking potential of Chinese communism.

Yet, if today's China is no longer what it was assumed or projected to be even twenty-five years ago, what then is it? Where did it come from, and how did it get here? These are the questions that lie beneath a slow-motion revolution in the academic study of the first half of China's twentieth century. Though perhaps not yet so far advanced in a technical sense as the newer approaches to Qing history, recent reworkings of the story of "Republican China" (1912–49) now lead to a new, and perhaps happier, ending. It used to be that we were taught to regard this era as nothing but an exercise in futility, a series of false starts, an odd sort of *opera buffa*, albeit with a cast of millions in misery. Now we are encouraged to see the teens, twenties and thirties as a fertile seedtime, with advances in politics, commerce and culture that prefigure the China—and the Hong Kong, the Taiwan and the Singapore—we see today.

As in the "imperial" case, it is a disservice to the range and volume of "Republican" studies since 1980 merely to pick (even if not quite at random) representative samples. But to take just one example, it used to be widely thought that Chinese foreign policy and especially China's diplomacy during the 1920s and 1930s was close to nonexistent and, by and large, irrelevant. Harvard's William Kirby points us in a dramatically different direction, drawing our attention to the deep origins of contemporary China. In Kirby's summation, "The story of Chinese diplomacy in the Republican era is one of stunning accomplishments from a position of unbelievable weakness." The

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new Republic took only a shaky title to a huge piece of real estate:

> No Chinese empire had been so big for so long as the Qing realm of the Manchus. The first decade of the twentieth century was full of portents of its dissolution. But the amazing fact of the Republican era is that this space was not only redefined as 'Chinese,' and as the sacred soil of China, but also defended diplomatically to such a degree that the borders of the PRC today are essentially those of the Qing, minus only Outer Mongolia. The Qing fell, but the empire remained. More accurately, the empire became the basis of the Chinese national state. This was perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Republican diplomacy.[2]

Kirby also notes that the Republic was successful in recovering the country's internal sovereignty, so that the PRC inherited a state unencumbered by extraterritoriality, foreign concessions and the like. He also praises the skill of the Republic's diplomats in maintaining between 1912 and 1945 an intricate pattern of international alliances and affiliations within a constantly shifting—and always dangerous—international environment.

China's contemporary strategic situation, of course, is not what it was then. What gives the history of the Republic's diplomacy relevance to the present day, however, is its style and complexity. After all, during its first twenty-five years, the PRC had a narrow range of international relationships, especially so-called institutional relations. Much of its energy in foreign affairs was consumed in those peculiar intra-Communist International relations of the old communist world, reflective of the old "two bloc" strategic balance. But the situation of today's China is far more complicated, and its international operations far more varied and intricate—not only on the plane of formal diplomatic relations with dozens of countries, but also with "global" bodies of many kinds. The Republican era thus has new relevance, and will probably earn a new status in Chinese eyes before very long.

IF WE ARE able to see things differently from the commanding heights of high politics and grand strategy, the view from the bottom up is also under revision. For one, there is a renewed interest in and a growing appreciation of China's early Republican experimentation with a variety of forms of democratic self-government and local administration. Indeed, many of these preceded the founding of the Republic. In the last days of the Qing dynasty, provincial assemblies and debates therein about political theories—inspired by developments in Meiji Japan, Bismarckian Germany and even post-1905 Romanov Russia—held out the possibility of a constitutional monarchy in China that might have transformed people from subjects to citizens.

For another and more encompassing example, Professor Wen-hsin Yeh of Berkeley, in reflecting on the history of modern Shanghai (China's most important and cosmopolitan city then and now), provokes us to reconsider one of the central conceits of the Maoist view—the "surrounding of the city by the countryside"—understanding it not merely as a metaphor for a tactic of guerrilla warfare, but as a shorthand way of expressing the overcoming of Shanghai's Western-derived reaction and decadence by the revolutionary and modernizing

[2]Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican Era", in *Reappraising Republican China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Richard Louis Edmonds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 183. Originally printed in *The China Quarterly*.

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forces of "scientific socialism."[3] Yet Shanghai, once a symbol of everything bad that the world had done to China and, worse, a major weapon that served Western interests against Chinese ones, is on balance better seen as something else entirely—the incubator and disseminator of the creatively modern. The false starts and blind alleys, irrelevant because they did not lead to 1949 and all that, have a powerful saliency today. They demonstrate a Chinese capacity to comprehend everything included in the contemporary definition of modernity, whether in politics, economics, science or, especially, culture.

In retrospect, and with the benefit of the hindsight provided by the two decades between the demise of Maoism and the consolidation of Dengism, we should not be startled by such a role reversal between the "proletarian" countryside and the now "globalized" city. All politics may be local, but all history is no longer localized; instead, it can be fitted into a re-evaluation of China's larger cultural history in recent times. After all, the "modern" in modern Chinese art and literature was itself once regarded as inseparable from Chinese political radicalism; but the political radicalism is now gone and still the cultural history remains.

That history has of late become a subject for the method of contemporary "cultural studies", and its technique and jargon have been applied to the material. In the general understanding of this obscurantist vocabulary, such cultural studies are supposed to reaffirm a left-wing view of things. However, even if that were once its intention, when applied to *materia sinica*, the result has been something else again. Taken together, these efforts have not only rediscovered a trove of neglected cultural materials, they have returned us to an older way of looking at China's culture, placing it well above political sectarianism. To invent some lingo of one's own that derives from "postmodernist" argot, the influence of modern Chinese cultural achievement is seen increasingly as universalizing, cosmopolitanizing and de-ideologizing.

The tyranny of politics, which seemed to have killed the Chinese literary renaissance of the 1920s, is now without apologists. The final verdict was delivered by China's first Nobel laureate in literature, Gao Xingjian, in his lecture accepting the prize in Stockholm on December 7, 2000:

> Chinese literature in the twentieth century time and again was worn out and indeed almost suffocated because politics dictated literature. Both the revolution in literature and the revolutionary literature alike passed death sentences on literature and the individual. The attack on Chinese traditional culture in the name of the revolution resulted in the public prohibition and burning of books. Countless writers were shot, imprisoned, exiled or punished with hard labour in the course of the past one hundred years. This was more extreme than in any imperial dynastic period of China's history, creating enormous difficulties for writings in the Chinese language and even more for any discussion of creative freedom.

Politics is no longer in command. The regime in Beijing today is waging at most a rearguard action against Chinese cultural creation on the Chinese mainland, and the regime, with due allowance for its

[3]See Wen-hsin Yeh, "Shanghai Modernity: Commerce and Culture in a Republican City", in Wakeman and Edmonds, op. cit. Professor Yeh is also the editor of a fascinating eleven-essay anthology on the larger subject, *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). As for the modern and postmodern, one should read a book by Professor Xiaobing Tang of the University of Chicago, *Chinese Modern: The Heroic and the Quotidian* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), and not be misled by the lingo.

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Photofest

Bertolucci's Last Manchu

intermittent brutalities and crackdowns, is losing. Moreover, it is without sway over cultural creation in greater China and among Chinese all over the world, and is, in any case, unable to insulate the mainland from the effects of that creation.

Sinology as a Chinese Vocation

FOR THE PAST four centuries, the study of China has been an international undertaking with non-Chinese having the dominant, though not the exclusive, influence over the world's perceptions of the country and its history. This has been especially true since the mid-nineteenth century, given the enormous difficulties that the collapse of civil order and the subsequent Maoist brutalities presented to any Chinese who might be interested in learning about their own tradition. Those of us outside the country had to develop a kind of self-reliance, relying more on ourselves than we might have had times been more "normal." For example, in the United States the professional study of China and the university teaching that derived from it were initially and importantly the work of American missionaries resident in China and, later, their China-born sons. C. Martin Wilbur (1909–97) and A. Doak Barnett (1922–99) are representative examples, though, in citing them, one should not gloss over the enormous influence of Chinese scholars based at universities in the United States from, say, 1930 on. After all, these men were old enough to be among the last to receive classical Chinese educations, yet still young enough to be Chinese pioneers in earning doctorates from American universities.

Beyond their role as China scholars, Americans of backgrounds similar to that of Wilbur and Barnett also filled important positions in the U.S. Foreign Service. Most of the so-called "old China hands" were China-born, and that influence was felt even after the reopening of the U.S. embassy in Beijing in 1979, as if a kind of restoration had occurred. The man who had closed the embassy in 1949 was J. Leighton Stuart, a prominent China-based Presbyterian educator who was president of Yenching University when General George Marshall sponsored his appointment as ambassador. Since the post was reopened after "normalization", three of the ambassadors who served there were China-born:

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Arthur Hummel, Jr., J. Stapleton Roy and James Lilley.

The establishment of the PRC, and especially its deep isolation from the Western world in general and the United States in particular, destroyed the human linkages that had dated from the mid-nineteenth century. The sociology of American sinology also changed, tracking larger changes in American higher education and its new post-World War II meritocracy. Just as the student bodies in the Ivy League became less predominantly old-line Protestant, so too did the field of China studies, sometimes establishing new ties between ancient intellectual traditions. Back in 1992, for example, the late Benjamin Schwartz, professor emeritus of Harvard and one of America's greatest sinologists, noted that, "Some of the most meaningful encounters between the Jews and China have occurred only in recent years, as the number of scholars of Jewish origin who are interested in both traditional and modern China has grown significantly."[4]

Predictably, the transformation of China from a crumbling place in need of patient American tending into a leading-edge revolutionary state bent on supplanting American influence everywhere transformed the nature of America's interest in the place. Students at Harvard and Yale, once drawn to China as a country ripe for religious and political conversion by America, now became interested in the connection between the advent of the People's Republic and other great upheavals in world politics. And the interest changed once again as "China policy" became linked to "Indochina policy" and the controversies surrounding the latter.

Beyond the political, the younger students of the older China scholars had a profoundly, indeed decisively, different educational experience. They were studying China at a time when Americans did not go there. Instead, they would go to the British enclave of Hong Kong and peer into the mists on the other side of the border. Or they would go to Taiwan, not yet the economic success it later became and, for all the claims of the rump Nationalist regime established there, a backwater so far as things Chinese were concerned—still showing more the legacy of fifty years of Japanese governance than the fifteen or twenty of Nationalist rule.

The graduate students of today travel throughout China in search of dissertation fodder, and the China they see is different from anything their teachers could have imagined. In a sense, the transformation of the past two decades, from 1980 to the present day, resembles the startling changes in China between, say, 1940 and 1960. At the least, it all takes some getting used to. Another change has been the enormous movement of young Chinese through the American university system. They now number in the hundreds of thousands, initially directed mostly to the sciences, then to business and management, and then into the study of China itself. These young Chinese from the mainland have joined the many tens of thousands from Taiwan and other places in the Chinese diaspora who have also studied in the United States. And the academic successes of Chinese-Americans have quickly become legendary.

So far as China studies are concerned, there is already an observable trickle-down effect. Even a cursory look at the faculty rosters in university and college catalogues shows how the study and teaching of China in the United States is increasingly the province of people who—in one way or another—are Chinese, who are connected to China and the Chinese world and things Chinese, just as older American scholars and teachers had per-

[4]Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *The Jews of China: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), p. 333.

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sonal ties to China of one sort or another. Of course, we have had a comparable experience in how we came to our understanding of imperial Russia, the old USSR and Eastern Europe, in that many of our greatest scholars were products of those places, either born there (Adam Ulam, Richard Pipes) or "first-generation" children of émigrés. More interesting still, several Americans prominent in the conduct of U.S. relations with that part of the globe—Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright—were born in the old world.

But that was the twentieth century, and it is hard to predict what the repetition of that pattern in China studies and diplomacy might imply for the twenty-first. For those whose "old world" is in the East and not in the West, the differences cannot be inconsequential, even if it is hard to compare how a product of the collapse of the Hohenzollern or Habsburg empire has thought about America's connection to his ancestral home to how a product of the Manchu empire might come to view his own such connection. This kind of inner speculation must now inevitably engage those upon whom important responsibilities are devolving by the day—another episode in the endless meeting between East and West. □

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Islamism: R.I.P.

Ray Takeyh

NOT LONG after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a chorus of influential opinion-makers in Washington began to sound an alarm about a new ideological threat posed to the West: the spread of "Islamism", a virulent brand of political Islam whose adherents demonized the culture, governments and even the citizens of Western democracies. In recent months, the streets of the West Bank and Gaza have seemingly validated that judgment, as discontented Palestinian youths, infused with religious fervor, revolted against an equitable peace proposition and chose to vent their frustrations against their Israeli neighbor and its distant American ally. Yet, despite sporadic manifestations of terror and fury, the "Green Peril" never made it into the weight class of the "Red Menace." While two decades ago Iran's self-confident mullahs professed to lead an Islamic crusade, today Islamism is everywhere on the retreat and U.S. pundits appear to have forgotten that many of them had recently deemed it an immediate peril. So where did it go?

Radical Islam exploded on the scene at a moment when the Middle East was undergoing a profound identity crisis. The failure of Arab nationalism, revealed most starkly by Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, led its disillusioned ranks to a new ideology, one rooted in religion. For all their professions of piety, however, the new activists eschewed the mosque and sought the guidance of lay intellectuals such as Egypt's Sayyid Qutb and Iran's Ali Shariati, who had recast Islam as a revolutionary creed. In fact, a manifest strain of anti-clericalism pervaded the Islamism of the early 1970s; its followers rejected the apolitical stance of the Muslim clergy and condemned the clerical estate for its political quietism. In the Islamist telling, Islam was, not unlike Marxism, an all-encompassing ideology that would restructure society and revolutionize the polity. As one of Tunisia's leading Islamist thinkers, Rashed Ghannoushi, put it,

> Islamism is the sum total of intellectual, social, economic, cultural and political activities which spring from the comprehensive Islamic viewpoint, in order to support them in theory and apply them in practice in all spheres of life with the objective of establishing a new political and cultural entity.

Such exaggerations are not exclusive to Islamist visionaries. In the pages of this very magazine, Daniel Pipes, a perennial critic of political Islam, nonetheless perceived in Islamism "a way of navigating the shoals of modernization."

The foremost problem, as the Islamists saw it, was that the Arabs had

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forsaken their patrimony and adopted Western ways. As a substitute, the Islamists advocated imitating the ancestral ways of the initial Islamic community under Prophet Muhammad. Reclaiming this mythical heritage would lead to the renewal of Islamic civilization. For the new disciples of God, the Quran offered all the solutions to properly guide modern civilization. Sayyid Qutb warned that the "Scientific Revolution has finished its role. It is now the turn of Islam." Islamism initially proved seductive to those on the margins of society, excluded from wealth and power. Yet, unlike Marxism, which described the historical stages that would conceive a new society, Islamism was merely an ideology of wrath, confining itself to fulminating against the debilitating Western culture and the debased, acculturated Arab elites.

In a sense, the Islamists misunderstood the demands of their constituents. The Arab masses desired not a return to the seventh century, but political modernization and economic progress. Before an ideology can transform itself into a governing dogma, it must first offer an appealing platform, and this Islamism plainly lacked. For example, the Islamists claimed to have devised a new economic system that would render obsolete the twentieth-century models of capitalism and Marxism. Supposedly, it would reconcile the imperatives of social justice with the demands of efficiency and productivity. Alas, when pressed for detail, Islamists claimed simply that a society devoted to salvation would produce virtuous citizens willing to subordinate individual gain to the collective good. Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr, a leading Islamist economic thinker, predicted, "We will produce according to our capabilities and consume according to virtue." Typically, Ayatollah Khomeini, one of the progenitors of Islamism, declared that the "Revolution is not about the price of melons."

The reason Islamist economic theory is so cursory is that Islamists are preoccupied with politics. Nevertheless, Islamists have not excelled at governance. They have, for example, proven incapable of devising and sustaining national coalitions. Their incendiary rhetoric and uncompromising approach to statecraft have alienated the very middle classes that earlier sympathized with their critique of corrupt elites. In Egypt, Islamists committed a remarkable strategic blunder as they terrorized the tourism industry, directly imperiling the livelihoods of millions of Egyptians. In Algeria, the Islamist campaign of terror against intellectuals and journalists frightened the middle class, which soon came to prefer martial law to unchecked bands of Islamist militants. In a similar vein, Iran's clerics have insisted on a degree of ideological and social conformity that has alienated large segments of the population, particularly the educated classes.

Indeed, Egypt, Algeria and Iran have been the main laboratories of Islamist experimentation. Although militant Islam made inroads in every state in the Middle East, its ultimate triumph always depended on success in these three countries—the "bookends" of the Muslim world—and in each it has failed. In Egypt, militant Islamists opted for the formation of a vanguard party, which was to destabilize the state through sporadic acts of violence. Their efforts met with abject failure. In Algeria, the Islamist challenge began with the formation of an Islamist party and its participation in multiparty elections, but ended in an unspeakably vicious civil war, which the Islamists have clearly lost. In Iran, a radicalized segment of the clergy came to power through a populist revolution only to witness the rapid disintegration of its once formidable power base. As different as the Islamist experience was in these three countries, in each case the reason for defeat was the same: Islamism

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never amounted to more than a shell of an ideology.

Egypt

BEGINNING in 1992, Egypt faced one of its most serious crises as it confronted twin plagues of economic stagnation and armed insurrection. The nightmare of the Iranian revolution loomed. A 1993 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate predicted, "Islamic fundamentalist terrorists will continue to make gains across Egypt, leading to the eventual collapse of the Mubarak government." Yet, eight years later, the Mubarak government has not only survived, but has, through concerted economic and security measures, largely succeeded in crushing the Islamist challenge.

Islamic activism has deep roots in Egyptian society. Populist associations such as the Muslim Brotherhood have long played a role in creating alternative social welfare networks. Although the goal of these organizations was always the establishment of an Islamic state, until the last decade they avoided violence. Their militarization in the early 1990s was partly the result of the economic deterioration that gripped Egypt in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The average Egyptian's living standard was eroded by a 20 percent inflation rate, while the budget deficit hovered at approximately 18 percent of GDP. The state's inability and unwillingness to address problems of chronic unemployment offered an opening to extremist groups. Two radical organizations, Al-Jihad and Al-Jama Al-Islamiyya, spearheaded the new movement. The initial popularity of these groups derived from the fact that they offered Egypt's disenfranchised youth an idiom of dissent and a sense of community. Yet their radicalism ultimately contributed to their collapse.

As part of their attempt to overthrow the Egyptian regime, the Islamists launched an economic destabilization campaign, assaulting key financial institutions and production facilities. The campaign intensified in the early 1990s as Islamists began to target the tourism industry, the bloodline of Egypt's economy. But attacks such as the notorious Luxor assault in 1997, in which over one hundred foreign and Egyptian tourists were killed, prompted widespread public revulsion. An editorial in the influential daily, *Al-Ahram*, captured the public mood, declaring, "If this is what they will do to get into power then what are they going to do to us once they are in power?" Islamist violence, indeed, succeeded mostly in mobilizing the Egyptian populace behind the government's anti-Islamist platform.

Beyond their self-defeating campaign of terror, Al-Jihad and Al-Jama were unable to offer specific solutions to Egypt's seemingly intractable economic problems. The Islamist economic program was limited to slogans such as "God will provide" and the equally vague "Quran will feed the hungry." As with Islamists elsewhere, the whole emphasis was on achieving political power. Yet their conception of politics was similarly muddled. "Democracy is objectionable", Muhammad al-Ghazali, a leading Islamist intellectual, proclaimed, "because it treats equally the virtuous and the debauched, the strong and the weak, the believer and the infidel." Islamist discourse calling for the implementation of Islamic law offered powerful symbols, but it never addressed issues such as political empowerment, corruption and one-party rule. Despite their efficiency in providing social welfare services, the inability of the Islamists to proffer a coherent economic agenda and a palatable political program prevented them from emerging as an alternative to the established order.

To be sure, the brutal tactics that Hosni Mubarak employed to combat the

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Islamists did much to speed the loss of their influence. But their ranks were never replenished because Egypt's populace sensibly rejected the notion that the violent overthrow of the state would magically solve its problems. Support for militant Islam gradually dwindled as the Islamists failed to provide a rationale for even the most disillusioned youth to battle Egypt's security apparatus.

Algeria

MORE than any other Arab country, Algeria has encapsulated the hopes and fears of the Arab world's Westernized intelligentsia. During the period of post-World War II decolonization, Algeria captured the Arab imagination when its francophone elite resisted and ultimately defeated French colonial rule. The architects of this revolutionary triumph further kindled the hopes of the Arab Left by constructing a socialist state to spearhead the Non-Aligned Movement. Much to the despair of Arab salons, Algeria was subsequently torn apart in the name of Islam, its socialist ideology supplanted by a pre-modern faith.

As with many Middle Eastern states, the Algerian economy depends almost exclusively on exploitation of its petrochemical resources. The decline of the oil market in the late 1980s led to the failure of Algeria's command economy, as double-digit inflation and unemployment rapidly eroded living standards. To counter popular discontent, the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) turned to political liberalization and multiparty elections. It was in this context that a coalition of Islamist forces entered the political arena under the banner of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), scoring successive electoral triumphs in municipal and parliamentary elections.

The FIS's surging political fortunes derived less from the appeal of its vision than from the bankruptcy of the FLN's state socialism and decades of authoritarian rule. The Islamist alternative to the prevailing order was always expressed in ambiguous terms, which initially attracted voters. The party avoided publishing a platform or issuing policy directives, while its economic program was limited to slogans claiming, "Wealth and Prosperity will come through Islam." As with their counterparts in Egypt, FIS leaders dismissed the importance of economics and stressed that God would never permit a society devoted to salvation to suffer scarcity and poverty. As well as this, the Islamists' professed attachment to pluralism and to democratization was always suspect, for the assertion of transcendent principles as the basis of the new political system did not leave much room for ideological diversity. FIS leader Ali Belhaj confirmed many fears when he declared that, "When we are in power there will be no more elections because God will be ruling."

The nullification of elections and a military crackdown in 1992 led to the fragmentation of the FIS and civil war. The Islamist organization that now came to the forefront was the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA condemned the FIS's electoral approach and exclaimed that "power is within the range of our Kalashnikovs." The GIA's targets of assassination and bombing were indiscriminate: government institutions, universities, army barracks, industrial plants and impoverished urban centers. Such a self-defeating strategy not only alienated the populace, particularly the lower strata of the society that accounted for the bulk of Islamist support, but also provided ample justification for the regime's brutal counterinsurgency tactics.

After nearly a decade of civil war, the Algerian military has effectively defeated the Islamist insurgency. But, as in Egypt, the Islamist movement lost popular sup-

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port well before its collapse. The Algerian state succeeded because its actions were supported by the citizenry. In successive presidential and parliamentary elections, Algerians have been given an opportunity to cast their ballots for multiple parties and candidates. The Algerian economy, through substantial international efforts and the revival of the oil market, has gradually recovered. In essence, the Algerian state rehabilitated itself by succeeding in two areas that the Islamists failed: providing a coherent economic plan and a mechanism for increased participation in the political process.

Iran

A GENERATION after Iran's mullahs proclaimed the right of religion to rule, the world's only modern theocracy is edging toward implosion. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini professed to have created a new order in which Islamic injunctions would be fused with democratic ideals and yield a new ideology. The Grand Ayatollah proved a master tactician, forging a coalition of liberal intellectuals, traditional clerics, Marxist guerrillas and members of the merchant class, a coalition that managed to end Iran's two millennia of dynastic rule. But, as the current state of the Islamic Republic attests, Khomeini's revolution died with him.

Revolutions must ultimately be judged by whether they translate their promises into achievements. Among other things, Iran's theocrats pledged to bring sustained economic benefits to the impoverished and to an overburdened middle class. Yet, after two decades of clerical misrule, Iran's economy is plagued by a bloated state sector, resource mismanagement, rampant corruption and excessive dependence on a volatile petroleum market. Iran now confronts 40 percent inflation and 20 percent unemployment. All these problems are compounded by demographic pressure, as the regime is unable to provide employment for a majority of the 800,000 graduates that annually enter the job market. And, despite its religious pretensions, the post-revolutionary state embraces a socialist approach to economic planning and remains devoted to the elimination of "capitalist exploitation."

The Islamic Republic's political system has been equally unresponsive to the demands of its constituents. Hardline clerics have withdrawn earlier pledges to create a pluralistic order and have constructed instead an autocratic regime. It is true that Iran's theocracy has featured regular elections, but the choice of candidates is limited to those who adhere to the Islamist ideology. Moreover, real power remains in the hands of the Supreme Religious Leader. Iran is, for all intents and purposes, a single-party state.

The attempt to reconcile Islamic imperatives with the exigencies of modern society has resulted in contradictions that Iran's theocrats seem incapable of resolving. Frightened of the possibility that the free market will unleash forces beyond their control, the clerics refuse to loosen the reins of Iran's command economy. Equally fearing the ramifications of a truly democratic political system, the regime controls both legislation and candidates for office. The mullahs now face a new generation that neither experienced the revolution nor has any evident commitment to its ideals. The demands of Iran's youth for the elimination of suffocating cultural restrictions, as well as for fundamental economic reform and political freedom, threaten the very identity of the Islamic Republic.

In fact, for Iran to avoid collapsing into civil strife it must adopt some basic secular tenets. This task may be possible, as growing numbers within Iran's elite

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seem to recognize Islam's limited utility as a template for governance. Whatever direction the country takes, this much is at least evident: Khomeini failed to establish a durable Islamic polity in Iran, and the clerics are ruling on borrowed time.

IN THE EARLY 1990s, the turmoil in Egypt and Algeria and the apparent durability of Iran's theocracy led many to forecast radical Islam's eventual triumph throughout the Middle East. But the old order prevailed. It would be wrong, however, to attribute the failure of political Islam solely to the retaliatory power of the state. The primary cause of Islamism's failure was its ideological incoherence. It was not a product of theological disquisition but a reaction to the failings of a decrepit socioeconomic order. As an oppositional posture, it may have had its uses, but as anything more it has been tested repeatedly and found wanting.

Dilemmas of institutional decay, maldistribution of wealth, and the absence of democracy were simply beyond the ken of the Islamists' empty ideological formulations. When in power, as in Iran, the Islamists created a command economy that suffered from numerous and irreparable defects, and was plagued by corruption at every level. The Ayatollahs' intended political utopia quickly lapsed into a familiar pattern of Third World authoritarianism. The failure of Islamism in power has been matched by the intellectual poverty of Islamism in opposition. Lacking a coherent agenda, Islamist movements embraced terror as an instrument of political change. But their violence could not match the brutality of the states they challenged. The moment of political Islam has now passed. Genuine political liberalization and economic modernization remain the only viable means of transcending the Arab predicament. □

A Glut of Admirals

A few simple and undeniable facts, in a land where everything else seems open to blatant misinterpretation and colourful translation: 280 billion dollars have been earned in export revenues from oil yet [Nigeria's] GNP per person is lower now than before the oil was discovered. Fewer than half of all Nigerians have access to clean water, and foreign debt stands at 32 billion dollars. There are six times as many admirals as there are ships in the Nigerian navy, and though Nigeria trains and supports an air force of 10,000 men, it possesses fewer than 20 serviceable aircraft. And where weapons are totally unavailable, juju is employed to turn back the bullets of others (even the bullets of the Mobil Police, nicknamed Kill and Go, notorious for their own acts of extortion and execution).

—Robert Edric, *The Spectator* (London), January 13, 2001

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Books

The Guns of 17th Street

Jonathan Clarke

Robert Kagan and William Kristol, eds., *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000), 200 pp., $22.95.

IT IS COMMON currency that the Clinton administration's foreign policy was a disappointment. Even Clinton supporters give him only a middling grade. With the President never fully engaged (a few amateurish, end of term flourishes aside), policy either reacted to crises or preserved the status quo. Here and there are some bright spots—NAFTA was consolidated, relations with Vietnam were normalized, progress, albeit fragile, was made on Northern Ireland, and the UN dues issue was settled. Elsewhere, however, the legacy is full of unfinished business: uneasy relationships with Russia and China; impasse in Kosovo and Bosnia; indecision on European defense structures; Japan uncertain of its status; the Middle East in disarray; Iraq policy on the verge of breakdown; Haiti a dismal failure; Colombia on the threshold of implosion; Africa still adrift from the mainstream; a gaggle of emergent "global issues" like the environment and AIDS sitting uncomfortably with traditional foreign policy issues; treaty issues such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the International Criminal Court in limbo. Most of all, at the beginning of the second decade after the demise of the Soviet Union, there is still little consensus on America's core role and purposes in the circumstances of the new world.

However, conservative critics who have enjoyed easy pickings with Clinton's mediocre performance now face a more demanding challenge. As with the liberals following Richard Nixon's 1962 defeat in California, conservatives no longer have their favorite Aunt Sally to kick around. Instead they have power. Having for eight years bemoaned the administration's incompetence from the bleachers, they now sit in the coach's booth.

It is already clear that Republicans do not have a coherent game plan. Apart from a generic feeling that an expanded national missile defense is a good idea and that more military spending is needed, there is wide divergence on specifics, including the top-tier questions like China and Russia. At the risk of general-

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izing, it is possible to discern two major strands of thought. The first is the one whose proponents are now settling into actual jobs: pragmatic, non-ideological "realists", represented by the well-known figures of past Republican administrations whose views found expression in then-candidate George W. Bush's November 2000 speech on "A Distinctly American Internationalism." The second is a Young Turk school of "hegemonists", whose objective is to complete on a global scale what they regard as the American Cold War triumph over the Soviet Union. Both strands are internationalist in orientation and favor a strong global role for the United States. As such they entirely eclipse a third strand, isolationism, which has lost its former salience and whose advocates have now either left the Republican Party or have negligible influence.

IN THIS important new book edited by Robert Kagan and William Kristol, the would-be hegemons set out their stall. Deriving from a 1996 *Foreign Affairs* article, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy" (which, having been published at a time of maximum Clinton foreign policy drift, was received as a powerful *cri du coeur*), much of the book focuses on the shortcomings of the Clinton administration's performance. In very specific and credible detail, the various authors critique the Clinton record and find it wanting. "A squandered opportunity", "flaccid", "drift", "folly" and "based on illusion" are some of their conclusions, all backed by meticulous and knowledgeable research. Few will disagree. The foreign policy inheritance of the Bush administration is not an enviable one.

With Clintonism now fading into the archives, the book's chief interest lies less in its dissection of the past than in its prescriptions of how the authors will right the deficiencies they discern. Commendably, they do not shy away from the logic of their arguments. They advocate clear and robust options. Nor do they conceal the budgetary implications of their recommendations: a $60 billion to $100 billion increase in *annual* defense spending. The proposals for increased military appropriations and national missile defense coincide with early Bush administration ideas—although Bush has indicated that he may move less aggressively on the former than many had supposed. Other ideas, particularly in the sphere of regional activism, go beyond the emerging sense of caution. Given that the book contains many trenchant criticisms of earlier Republican policies (Nixon is dismissed for wanting to "coexist" with the Soviet Union; George Bush's post-Desert Storm policy is rejected as "absurd"; Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison's views on force deployment are characterized as "mistaken"), it may engender some fratricidal sparks. It may be that some of its contributors are now anxiously searching the text lest some superheated phrase has cost them hope of preferment.

The book advocates a U.S. foreign policy of maximum muscularity. No concession is offered to the traditional arts of diplomacy. Indeed, those of us who have labored in overseas chanceries in the interests of "good relations" find our endeavors ridiculed. The word "stability" is used in quotation marks as though it was somehow a suspect notion of doubtful legitimacy. The conventional ingredients of national interest are attacked as imposing rigid, undesirable limitations on American options. The concept of engagement is dismissed as the equivalent of appeasement.

Far from looking for ways to take the toxicity out of international problems, the authors purposefully seek out trouble spots (the Taiwan Strait, North Korea, Iraq) and then reach for the gas can.

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"Quiet diplomacy" or "keeping one's powder dry" are anathema. "Steely resolve" is the watchword, with the emphasis on steel. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that if the book's combined recommendations were implemented all at once, the United States would risk unilaterally fighting at least a five-front war, while simultaneously urging Israel to abandon the peace process in favor of a new no-holds-barred confrontation with the Palestinians.

It would be a bad mistake, however, to dismiss the book as the work of armchair warriors from the academy. At its heart lies a tightly woven philosophy leading to a matrix for action. The policy recommendations may be uncomfortable for the diplomatic mainstream, but they present a serious challenge to the conventional norms of conducting business between nations. Explicitly rejected are the notions of "normalcy" and "strategic pause" as unworthy of a great nation like the United States, appropriate only for nations once described by Kipling as "lesser breeds without the law."

THE BOOK's central assertion is both negative and positive. First, it is a rejection of the idea that, in American foreign policy calculations, pragmatism should take precedence over ideology. Instead, the authors unapologetically and enthusiastically enthrone ideology, defined as the "set of universal principles derived from natural rights as enunciated in the Declaration of Independence", as the dominant feature of American foreign policy practice. This, in turn, leads the way to positive action. The authors argue that American moral exceptionalism should not just be a general source of inspiration (in the manner of John Quincy Adams) but should be actively asserted to "advance civilization and improve the world's condition"—for example, by promoting "regime change" in states like China that do not meet American standards.

In making this argument, the book presents a powerful case that, without such a commitment to American values and the willingness to deploy hard power in support of them, the Cold War would never have been won. They usefully nail the liberal rewriting of history that the Cold War was a period of rock-solid bipartisan agreement about ends and means. Elliott Abrams, one of the contributors with whom this reviewer had the privilege to cooperate in various Anglo-American forums on Central America, can attest to the vicious personal attacks he suffered for his courageous pursuit of a value-based policy that led to the defeat of the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran guerrillas. President Ronald Reagan, the hero of this book, was excoriated for his "evil empire" approach to the Soviet Union. Yet there is little doubt that, had it not been for Reagan's willingness to go beyond intellectual criticism of communism and commit himself to a forward-leaning action plan for its removal, the chances are good that the gulag would still be entertaining its guests.

The force of this argument for today's purposes is that the Nervous Nellies who worried that the Reagan approach (for example, the hugely controversial deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles to Europe) was either reckless or destabilizing or both were wrong. Spectacularly so. And if their worries were misplaced then, they are, by extension, misplaced now.

Few conservatives will quarrel with the propositions that power has an indispensable role in international affairs and that the United States should harness its own power in the causes of human freedom, prosperity and justice. The area of debate is how in practical terms power is most effectively deployed and whether there are other elements in international

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relations that might achieve the desired ends just as effectively, and with much less danger of potentially catastrophic warfare. Some minor weasel wording aside, the authors leave no doubt about where they stand. They echo Tacitus: "If you want peace, prepare for war."

AT FIRST blush, this is a compelling argument. But in fact there is a mass of contrary evidence that suggests it makes little sense to confine America's international instrumentality to the sword and nothing but the sword. The authors are far too experienced in international analysis to be unaware of this evidence, and, to be fair, Nicholas Eberstadt credits, somewhat grudgingly, President Kim Dae Jung's "sunshine policy" with a contributory role in the improved situation on the Korean Peninsula. But the reluctance of his colleagues to grapple with evidence that does not support their thesis is noteworthy.

The most important contrary indicator is, of course, the Vietnam War. Here is a war fought for precisely the value-pregnant reasons embraced in this book—a war fought in precisely the same mindset of overwhelming American military superiority, with precisely the same form of paper surrogates. These considerations should give genuine pause, not simply an excuse to say that it is time to move beyond the Vietnam "syndrome." It was not a syndrome, it was a killing field. Similar considerations apply to the Bay of Pigs episode, also dismissed as a syndrome.

A more modern example comes from the Balkans. According to the book's thesis, the Kosovo war should have removed Milosevic. Yet the book explicitly expects him to "present continuing risks to the United States and its allies in the new millennium." The inconvenient truth is that it was the actions of brave, democratically-minded Serbs who played the determining role in overthrowing Milosevic, not NATO bombs. The same, of course, is true of the Cold War. Reagan's approach was certainly heroic, but let us not forget the dock workers of Gdańsk (supported, incidentally, with significant funds from the AFL-CIO), the moral authority of Pope John Paul II, and the toughness of the Russian leadership in the face of coups. Let us also not romanticize the Reagan approach. At the Reykjavík summit he came extraordinarily close to coexistence by almost bargaining away his allies' nuclear forces. It is also fair to ask whether Israeli security has benefited from the sort of policies recommended in this book. Its withdrawal from Lebanon suggests that this is at least an open question.

Indeed, a central feature of the book is its inclination to ignore foreigners as actors in their own right. Apart from Reuel Marc Gerecht's essay—which makes a genuine, albeit hostile, attempt to understand Iranian politics—descriptions of foreign leaders are cartoonish. No attempt whatsoever is made, for example, to understand Iraqi motivations. This points to a common characteristic shared by much American foreign policy analysis: It is written by commentators whose primary background is in the academy or in Washington policy seminars. Such people often appear to inhabit a gated community of the mind. Overseas experience is not predominant.

Not surprisingly, however, overseas experience can provide perspectives that depart from those conceived in the Washington hot house. The account of the Cold War endgame as seen from the American embassy in Moscow in Jack Matlock's magnificent *Autopsy of an Empire* offers valuable detail of the diplomatic process that needs to be read alongside this book's interpretation. It is significant that in this volume Paul Wolfowitz, the only contributor with *en poste* diplomatic experience, offers significantly

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more nuanced recommendations on China. Wolfowitz rejects Cold War-type containment, favoring instead commercial engagement, working with China's domestic reformers, and capping Taiwan's independence aspirations. In stark contrast, Ross H. Munro describes China as a "rogue state" and proposes a three-front policy to "counter, confront and challenge China", as well as arming Taiwan to the teeth. These are not, as claimed, differences over a "set of tactics" within the book's prevailing ethos, but ones of fundamental philosophy.

This lack of meaningful and sustained interaction with foreigners produces a key conceptual error, namely, the sense that America's actions take place in a vacuum. In his masterful *On the Origins of War*, Donald Kagan (one of the contributors to this book, who, presumably in order to conform to the book's anti-appeasement thesis, presents a regrettably bowdlerized version of the run-up to World War II, much at odds with the sophisticated version in his scholarly work) sets out the *locus classicus* of realist thinking: "it was the growth of Athenian power, which presented an object of fear to the Spartans and forced them to go to war." This is an absolutely key point, well established in international relations theory as the "security paradox" and more popularly known as the "arms race." The authors seek to rebut the idea of countervailing actions by modern Spartas with the reassurance that, because the United States is "so powerful", such possibilities can be disregarded. Well, there is always a first time in history, but one sentence is far from an adequate rebuttal. Already there are warning signs that American moves on national missile defense will have just the opposite effect to that intended. Russia will slow the retirement of its ICBM fleet, China will accelerate development, and terrorists will exploit the ingenuity of subminiature nuclear or biological weaponry to pass over, through or around the Maginot Line of missile defense.

There is a curious flavor of Nietzschean "will" running through this book. There is a constant appeal to the need to mobilize the people to war. The "present dangers" of the title turn out not to be external threats but the possibility that the American people will not be sufficiently ready to lift up arms. There is a fascination with history's strong men, as if the "Triumph des Willen" was an admirable trait, albeit expressed as evil in certain of them. Whether this is really compatible with American ideals of limited, constitutional government by laws rather than by men is the subject of another essay.

ANY BOOK of this kind has omissions. The authors list Latin America as one. This is a pity. There are signs that the Bush administration will be more engaged in Latin America than its predecessor. Colombia will present an immediate challenge. Former drug czar Bill Bennett's description of Colombia as an "unabashed narco-state" suggests that the authors welcome the deepening U.S. military engagement there, but it would have been helpful to have a full article on the issue. (Bennett, incidentally, is responsible for one of the book's most bizarre statements, citing a medieval Serbian poem as an example of extreme nationalism, three hundred or so years before nationalism was invented. One might as well damn Shakespeare as an extreme nationalist for penning Henry V's anti-French fulminations before Agincourt or John of Gaunt's deathbed encomium to England.)

Two other omissions are so out of sight in the authors' *Weltanschauung* that they are not even listed in the list of omissions: Africa and the role of international law. The book's central thesis is that American overseas intervention is justified—indeed necessitated—because

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American values are universal. But do not West Africa and the Congo provide increasingly salient test cases for such a value-driven agenda? Their omission, presumably because they do not meet national interest criteria, leads to the suspicion that the authors' invocation of American values in other theaters functions more as rhetorical window-dressing than as an expression of core philosophy. With regard to the role of law, we should remember that we put the Nazis on trial *inter alia* for the crime of making war. If, as the authors suggest, they rehabilitate war as an acceptable instrument of national policy, there should perhaps be a passing reference to the legal ramifications.

In a work of broad intellectual sweep such as this, inconsistencies are bound to intrude. One practical instance is worth mentioning. In all their enthusiasm for finding latter-day Berlin Walls and tearing them down, the authors never mention the wall that actually exists in Europe, namely, the nearly thirty year-old UN-patrolled divide in Cyprus. Getting rid of this should be an attractive project for value-driven activists. But there is a practical problem. Making progress entails putting pressure on Turkey, a country that elsewhere in the book receives lavish praise for its contributions to the allegedly wimpish virtues of stability and classic national interest. Inconsistencies of this sort do not fatally undermine the book's central thesis, but they are a reminder that, in international relations, the supposedly watertight compartments of good and bad are more fluid than the authors would have us believe.

Balance is always needed in conducting, or in thinking about, foreign relations. There will be times when force is needed and others when force is entirely inappropriate. Munich may have been one of the latter times. Had Britain gone to war in 1938, the Battle of Britain would have taken place in 1939 and, with Royal Air Force rebuilding a year short, might well have been lost, with catastrophic results for history. This book's central omission is a failure to discuss these contingencies. Perhaps the fault lies in our slogans—which leads to a concluding plea: If the advocates of extreme muscularity will give up their perennial invocation of "Munich" as their all-purpose buzzword, the rest of us will give up "Vietnam" as ours. The MTV generation needs fresher examples. What about Sarajevo and Somalia? □

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Lincoln's Advice

The Hippocratic oath instructs doctors to 'above all, do no harm.' This is too exacting a standard to be applied to military intervention, because these situations defy precision and certainty. Nevertheless, when U.S. policymakers contemplate intervention abroad, they should do so with abundant humility, if not timidity, because of the profoundly uncertain connections between the blunt instruments they can use and the complex ends they seek. . . .

From the standpoint of U.S. policy, a cautionary admonition by Abraham Lincoln is also relevant: 'We should not promise what we ought not, lest we be called upon to perform what we cannot.'

—Charles Wolf, Jr., *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2000

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A Slithy Tove

George Walden

Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 464 pp., $27.95.

HUMANITY? A moral history? These are ambitious terms. Can this really be an account of the ethical forces that shaped or misshaped the lives of the entire human race through an entire century, from sexual mores and medical ethics to the morality of politics and international affairs? The scope of Jonathan Glover's *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* turns out to be more modest—largely a discussion of twentieth-century atrocities and criminal regimes from an ethical point of view.

We are, then, dealing not with the quotidian inhumanity of man to man, or his humanity for that matter, but with public policy that resulted in wars, massacres and repression. These we are invited retrospectively to condemn—a not insuperable challenge—while the author discusses how such aberrant behavior could possibly have come about. The targets are largely unmissable, and apart from one or two still controversial issues, such as Hiroshima, this is a highly consensual book. Once you place yourself on the side of humanity, sever the link between public and private morality, and see public policy as operating in a largely distinct realm, it is amazing how wide the consensus can become.

If the title, advertisement-like, inflates our expectations, the style is a concession to the televisual age. Rarely are we required to read more than a page or two of consecutive print. With his snapshot passages, sometimes a mere half page, quirky subheadings and anecdotalism, Glover seems to be aiming at an audience whose attention might wander if it were not sustained by constant changes of focus. There is something filmic about the result: a *Short Cuts* of twentieth-century horrors, each followed by roundtable deliberation, if you can imagine such a thing. The implication is that a filmic approach to history is the best and perhaps only way to engage a wide, modern audience.

And of course that approach must be novel: "This project of bringing ethics and psychology closer to one another involves thinking about the implications of some of the things we now know civilized people are capable of doing to each other." The impression is that in grafting a moral dimension onto well-known events and discussing the psychology of those involved, the author is doing something new. In fact, the ethics of public policy is a comfortably established discipline—too comfortably sometimes to be disciplined—especially in American universities, and the psychological aspects add surprisingly little that is not common sense.

Glover's method involves describing an incident or regime (Churchill's bombing of Germany, Hiroshima, My Lai, the Holocaust, Stalin's Russia), then subjecting it to categories of ethical elucidation devised by himself, such as "the erosion of moral identity", or the depletion of what he terms "the moral resources", meaning humanity's reserves of decency. The procedure is unrewarding. Journalistic accounts of twentieth-century regimes or atrocities, heightened by chilling anecdotes, make up the bulk of the book. No doubt it is salutary that younger readers should be reminded that there was such a thing as the Moscow Trials or the Chinese Cultural Revolution, knowledge of which is now widely seen, unfortunately, as being as relevant to the contemporary con-

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sciousness as the Schleswig-Holstein question. And doubtless this catalogue of depravity will leave the general reader appalled, indignant, sorrowful, entertained and strangely gratified, because that is how humans are. I am sure sensationalism was the last thing on the author's mind, though it is to some extent inherent in the subject. But he has certainly not sought to play it down.

The reasons behind the moral failures and ambiguities Glover documents are as well known as the horrors. Means justifying ends, reliance on technology to distance ourselves from inhuman actions, tribalism, a tendency mutely to obey orders, beliefs that negate human sympathy, a morally blind response when friends or relatives come under attack, or a "capacity to unchain ourselves", that is, to go morally berserk as at My Lai—such dolefully familiar human motivations are too often presented as if they were psychological insights.

Interspersed in no coherent form (there is more discussion of the tainted sources of Nazism than of communism) are critiques of statesmen and thinkers. Notoriously complex or self-contradictory figures like Heidegger and Nietzsche are given two-dimensional readings. Nietzsche's "will to power" is interpreted as if he were a Nazi pamphleteer, and his call for a higher man is confused with racism. The "will to power" was in fact closer to our concept of self-realization and creativity, as Nietzsche urged humanity—rightly, for certain—to beware the miserable self-satisfactions of mankind in the mass. Similarly, Heidegger is presented pretty much as a Nazi natural (his relations with Hannah Arendt show that he was not a nice man, but that is something else), with few nuances, and no discussion of how the same thinker became a darling of the French Left or of his role in existentialism.

Given its higher number of aficionados, and the vastly higher death toll acknowledged by Glover, it is odd that Marxism-Leninism and the moral responsibilities of its apologists are not examined at greater length. Among the odd, banal or unhistorical phrases that litter the book ("Dominating society through Belief was Stalin's original contribution"; "Mao discouraged gentleness"; "People are trapped by the limitations of their view of the world"), we find the following: "The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing." It would be lovely if it were so. Andrei Vyshinsky, eloquent on Montesquieu, was a man of intellect whose voice Glover himself quotes shrieking imprecations at the innocents he condemned to death—"these filthy dogs, these accursed reptiles."

Heidegger is rightly censured by Glover for his reticence after the event. Professor Eric Hobsbawm is an influential intellectual who defended Stalinism and to this day has declined to condemn the Soviet experiment. What is the moral position of Professor Hobsbawm, and why is he immune from the same kind of censure as Heidegger?

Another of Glover's less than novel statements is that "A climate of opinion can make a difference as to whether a disaster is avoided." What was the climate of opinion among Western intellectuals during the Cold War? In a letter to his friend "Koba" (Stalin's nickname) written from his death cell, which recently came to light and is perhaps the most awesome document of the twentieth century, the desperate Bukharin offers to go to the West "and win over large segments of the wavering intelligentsia" in favor of the Moscow Trials of which he is about to become a victim. Himself a brilliant intellectual, such was the climate of credulity in the West that I fear he would have had some success. If we are in the business of *ex post facto* allocation of guilt, do not the motives of those whose colossal failure of

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"moral imagination" (a term Glover rightly stresses) allowed them to applaud from the sidelines while millions were subjected to the monstrous experiment of communism deserve far more moral probing than they receive here?

THERE IS another vast lacuna here. Glover's period was the century of the masses in every sense—mass entertainment, mass movements, mass unemployment and prosperity, mass psychology, mass annihilation. What was the role of mass man, cankered apple of the twentieth century's eye, in all this moral mayhem? Of his sufferings and heroism we know, but what of his part in wreaking misery on himself?

Glover does not go so far as to suggest that wars and atrocities are things inflicted by authority on a passively enduring humanity, and acknowledges here and there that The People frequently needed little encouragement to engage in mutual slaughter or repression. He quotes, for example, a former Red Guard's confession that he had rather enjoyed beating up his fellow men and women. (Having spent two years in China during the Cultural Revolution, I can confirm the enthusiasm, even hilarity, with which one "mass" stamped the face of another.)

But the propensity of mass man for direct action—to "have done with discussion", in Ortega y Gasset's chilling words, which foreshadowed fascism—and the malignant power of populism, of which we are seeing new examples today, need to be addressed at greater length to avoid perpetuating the myth of the moral sanctity of The People. If the result of meting out blame all around leads to the somewhat trite conclusion that in one way or another we all deserve whipping, that is the penalty of attempting a moral history of humanity. Glover could have quoted that extraordinarily powerful book, *Diary of a Man in Despair*, by Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen, a German aristocrat murdered by the Nazis, whose descriptions of the venomous zeal of the "little man"—the schoolteacher or sub-postmaster—in doing the *Führer*'s will evoke the rank odor of sweat under the armpits of their proud brown shirts. As Auden wrote:

> The windiest militant trash
> Important Persons shout
> Is not so crude as our wish: . . .

For all its gimmicky presentation, the book's underlying approach is highly conventional, with its discussion of the Melian Dialogue and the theory of just war, its case histories selected to illustrate our capacity for evil, its Rawlsian leanings and opposition to the realist tradition in foreign affairs. Conformism is not always a bad thing, except when we pretend it is something else. And though Glover admits that the ethical dilemmas most of us face today are small beer by comparison with his period, the risk of falling into piousness and priggery is not wholly avoided. He speaks of his book as an attempt to see events "in an appropriate human perspective." But don't we all? What other perspective is there? There are also rather too many sententious passages, prefaced by phrases like "Those of us who . . .", or "Some of us do not want to be all dominance and assertion." And after describing Japanese atrocities against prisoners of war in sickening detail, Glover rebukes the British and Americans for calling the Japanese "yellow bastards" or "subhuman." Both actions are indeed reprehensible, but some of us retain a sense of proportion.

Confronting new generations with dilemmas about interpreting the past is a worthy task, and, for all its inadequacies, I am glad this book was written. Much of it is informative, readable and sound, and will do no one any harm. Nor would I doubt its sincerity for a moment. But morality is a slithy tove of a subject, one

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that easily wriggles from one's grip and darts off in unintended directions. Ours is an age of ease and smarmy sanctimoniousness, in which the most challenging decision many people take in the course of a year is whether to repaint their sitting rooms stonewall gray or magnolia; an era in which historical novels, TV shows, films and plays have discovered that there are easy profits and cheap glory to be gleaned from retrospective moralizing to a public imperfectly acquainted with history, not least because moralizing rather than imparting knowledge now plays a large part in public education.

In a final chapter outlining brief and unoriginal prescriptions for a healthier humanity (who has original ones?), involving greater international cooperation and suchlike, a passage about the danger of technology in the service of the destructive side of human psychology concludes with the fatal sentence: "*Something needs to be done* about this fatal combination" [my emphasis]. If this admirable but somewhat furry sentiment amounts to a plea for changing human psychology, I think we have a consensus for that.

From the grandiose title, the claims to novelty and the attention-grabbing presentation, it is clear that we are dealing with a popularized account of ethical thinking. Nothing wrong with that, any more than with the excellent popular science we now enjoy in abundance, and Glover's book has received good reviews in Britain. But ethics goes deeper than science, and the more popular a book the more important that it should not mislead—or overindulge—the non-specialist reader. The trouble with this book is that it risks leaving its readers feeling pretty good about themselves. As Karl Jaspers remarked, there comes a point at which morality becomes suspect—for purely moral reasons. □

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Riding the Tiger

Henry Rowen

Henry D. Sokolski, *Best of Intentions: America's Campaign Against Strategic Weapons Proliferation, 1945-2000* (Westport, CT: Praeger Books, 2001), 184 pp., $19.95.

AMERICAN administrations have struggled for over fifty years to control "the bomb." They have tried to limit the ability of the Soviet Union to destroy us with it; to keep other governments or private groups from getting it; to give us timely warning if those efforts should fail; and to reduce the likelihood of its inadvertent or deliberate use. All of this has involved dealing with states possessing vastly different degrees of power, whose relations with the United States ranged from close friendship to great hostility, and whose domestic politics varied greatly, from the stable to the mercurial and everything in between.

What can be said about the success of these efforts? There has been no military use of atomic weaponry since 1945, and

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there is but one notable exception—that by Iraq—to the non-use of chemical agents. As for the spread of the bomb, the number of countries that could make nuclear weapons today if they so desired (probably around fifty) is far greater than the number that actually has them (eight, or nine if North Korea has enough readily fissionable material). Similarly, the number of countries that possess rockets that can travel at least several hundred miles is much lower than the number capable of producing them.

As Henry Sokolski observes in *Best of Intentions*, however, to attribute this state of affairs to our specific non-proliferation policies would be a mistake. Many factors contributed to it, including alliances, pressures and inducements applied by the United States and others, and domestic politics. NATO and the formation of the European Community, for example, ended all major military rivalries in Western Europe. The Central Europeans could not have their own nuclear weapons while incorporated in the Soviet empire. The ending of South Korea's and Taiwan's weapons programs in the 1970s came from quiet U.S. pressure. And South Africa's white government got rid of its nuclear weapons of its own accord.

Arguably, more important than the *number* of countries possessing such weapons is the question of *who* possesses them. It is gratifying to know that entire continents are free of nuclear weapons and long-range rockets (South America, Africa, Australia), but a single government or terrorist organization armed with such weapons and a serious intent to do harm could cause a great disaster. Here the news is not so good. There are at least three countries that currently have weapons of mass destruction, or advanced programs for acquiring them, that are poised to cause a lot of trouble: North Korea, Iraq and Iran. Compounding this danger is the uncertain security of Russia's thousands of nuclear weapons.

SOKOLSKI gives us a history of five of the major initiatives to control these weapons: the Baruch Plan (1946), the Eisenhower administration's Atoms for Peace Program (1953), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT (from 1958), several technology control initiatives (from the 1970s on), and counter-proliferation (1990s). As Sokolski demonstrates, the focus of U.S. concerns shifted over time. Initially, it was to use a technology of great economic promise while preventing its military uses. Then, the growing ability of the Soviet Union to destroy American cities became of paramount concern. Subsequently, we became worried about the spreading of the bomb to other countries and about the intensity of the U.S.-Soviet arms competition. In the 1970s, the advanced countries devised quieter ways to slow the flow of technology to troublesome countries. In the 1990s, military action on a large scale against Iraq reflected more direct efforts toward the same goal.

The boldest proposals came early, between 1944 and 1946. The pioneers of the nuclear era saw the spread of nuclear weapons as potentially disastrous because those who acquired them would be tempted to crush adversaries. The United States itself would not be safe. An international energy authority under strong American leadership was thought to be the solution, a body that would have monopoly power over all potentially dangerous nuclear activities. The Baruch Plan held that the authority would need the power to punish nations that seized its plants or tried to develop dangerous facilities independently. (One can see shades of this plan in the 1991 UN resolutions authorizing the destruction of Iraq's weapons plants and the sending of inspectors.) The plan also required amending the recently enacted

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UN Charter to eliminate an encumbering Security Council veto over the authority's affairs. But the authors of the plan recognized this as difficult to achieve, and therefore concluded that nuclear energy's putative peaceful benefits would need to be shared in order to bring nations on board. Today it is easy to regard this plan as terribly unrealistic, but it should be remembered that not only was the technological revolution (and the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) still very fresh, but this was a time when the urge to rectify the failure of the League of Nations by a more powerful and legitimate United Nations was strong.

Sokolski, who keeps a measured tone throughout, describes some of the atomic energy policies as "at war with themselves." Here the palm for incoherence should probably go to the Eisenhower administration's Atoms for Peace Program, although the NPT offers stiff competition. Atoms for Peace was prompted by the Soviet Union's testing of a thermonuclear device and the subsequent build-up of its nuclear arsenal. The program's architects were focused on a "critical date" (mid-1954) by which time the Soviet Union would potentially have two hundred bombs. They missed the crucial point that it was not the number of bombs in stockpiles that mattered but the number that could survive an attack. If neither side could achieve a significant advantage by striking first, a more stable balance could be reached.

Atoms for Peace called for the United States and the Soviet Union to contribute fissile material to an international pool, which would be used to develop civilian nuclear energy activities. Safeguards would prevent the diversion of these activities to military ends. To make the safeguards more palatable, the program contained an offer to help countries acquire nuclear technology for civilian purposes. Indeed, many countries that have had such programs (for example, India, Pakistan, Israel, Iraq, Argentina, Iran and Brazil) got useful technology for them from the United States, Canada, France and Germany.

There was to be an International Atomic Energy Authority, but, unlike the bold authority envisioned in an earlier era, it lacked a provision for keeping countries from seizing materials and reactors or from developing facilities independently. The omission was a concession to opposition from the many countries that did not want to be deprived of possible uses of nuclear energy. This was not very disturbing to the American negotiators, given their view at the time that only large numbers of nuclear weapons constituted a serious threat. Thus the Eisenhower administration undertook to spread rocket technology in its Space for Peace program. All of this led Albert Wohlstetter, in his frustration, to quote Florence Nightingale: "At least hospitals shouldn't spread disease."

THE NEXT major initiative, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, also required non-nuclear countries to renounce the bomb and nuclear-armed ones to share technologies. The first three articles of the treaty prohibit sharing or accepting nuclear weapons technology; the fourth and fifth articles protect the right of non-nuclear states to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination, while calling on the nuclear-armed states to share their technology without reservation; the sixth article calls for total disarmament, while the tenth says that if non-nuclear states feel threatened they are free to acquire weapons. There was something in the treaty for everyone, including the non-nuclear states that had weapons programs at the time (such as India and Brazil). Sokolski notes that two of the most vocal critics of the superpowers' arms race,

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Sweden and India, were then considering developing nuclear weapons themselves. Indeed, India later proceeded to do so. (Of course, one could argue with some cogency that, by not disarming, the great powers possessing nuclear weapons had failed to keep their side of the bargain.)

Sokolski reminds us that the United States in 1958 had enacted a law enabling it to transfer any military-related nuclear technology to Britain, that we were moving nuclear weapons to Europe (under American legal control), and that we were also trying to persuade the Europeans and Congress to create a collective West European force (the Multilateral Force). Once that idea died and we had a large stockpile of nuclear weapons in Europe, we were ready to push the NPT.

Severe tensions were inherent in the situation. One was the difficulty of distinguishing between the haves and the have-nots, with the former using high-minded principles to try to deny technology to the latter, and the latter objecting to the discriminatory character of the treaty. Another arose from treating all the have-nots in the same way; after all, it is quite a stretch to treat as equivalent, say, Sweden and Iraq. Much, too, hinged on the definition of "peaceful." That turned out to be a matter of semantics, not technology, as India showed when it labeled its first nuclear explosion in 1974 a "peaceful" one. In so doing, it went through a large loophole created in the 1950s by theoretical American and Soviet "peaceful" nuclear explosion programs for creating harbors, loosening up tight gas fields, and building canals.

THIS HISTORY suggests a theorem: Any effort to constrain weapons-related transfers of technology through an international agreement causes governments that want these weapons, or believe they might someday want them, to demand a close approximation of the prohibited technologies as the price of adherence. So there is a further, and crucial, tension between getting signatures on a given agreement and advancing the purported aim of that agreement. Partly to counter this, the United States and other governments of the advanced countries secretly agreed to restrict transfers of sensitive technologies to countries deemed dangerous. Sometimes this strategy has been effective, sometimes not.

How have we handled warnings of moves toward the bomb? Sometimes by doing nothing, as with the case of Israel; or very little, as in the American and Canadian responses to India's diversion of equipment and heavy water, originally supplied for civilian purposes, to further its bomb program; or forceful, arm-twisting diplomacy, as with Brazil's and Argentina's bomb and missile efforts; sincere discussions (Taiwan and South Korea); cutting off military aid (Pakistan); bribery (North Korea). And, as a last resort, direct action, as in the attacks on Iraq's weapons plants in 1991 and later.

Clearly, the focus needs to be on actual and potential troublemakers. Collective action is usually needed and is usually difficult to arrange (and we have not always been energetic in seeking it). Nor are things getting easier. Given the many ways bombs can be moved about, the challenges to enacting effective active defenses are growing. Inexorably, many countries are finding that the barriers to having the bomb, or other weapons of mass destruction, are falling.

At the heart of the problem is the intimate connection between civilian and military uses of these technologies—a fact on which, as Sokolski shows, the pioneers of atomic energy policy were clearer than some of their successors. Both applications use fissile materials, the main difference being between those usable directly in a bomb and those that need some pro-

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cessing to be so used. A parallel is that between the military and civilian uses of rockets: The main difference between an intercontinental ballistic missile and a civilian space launch vehicle is simply the intended destination of its payload—a point on earth as opposed to an orbit in space.

Confusion persists in the public discourse on the issue. One example is the popular notion that plutonium produced in civilian reactors is "safe." However, it has long been public knowledge that such plutonium can be used in bombs at a penalty in explosive power and predictability. How much this penalty would matter to a user would depend on circumstances. For instance, in what sense should the two nuclear power reactors being given to North Korea, as part of the price for its shutting down its plutonium production reactor, be regarded as "safe"?

The fact that large parts of the world are without weapons of mass destruction offers a glimmer of hope. The greatest danger is centered in a small number of authoritarian regimes located in turbulent regions. In the long run, as countries in these troubled regions develop, they are likely to become more liberal and peaceful. That is not much comfort in figuring out what to do now about Saddam Hussein and his unconventional weapons programs, but it seems to be the only hope. □

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Traveling Light

Thomas Goltz

Robert D. Kaplan, *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus* (New York: Random House, 2000), 364 pp., $26.95.

LIKE HIS previous works, Robert Kaplan's most recent opus, *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus*, is a study in prophylactic pessimism. It is also a strident plea for his mostly American readers to understand those beyond their borders without sentiment or excessive hope. American policymakers are urged to remember that, the juggernaut of globalization notwithstanding, the countries now emerged from the shadows of communism are not blank slates upon which the financiers and idealists of the West may write what they wish. For this message alone we should all be grateful to Kaplan.

For years, Kaplan has been a refreshing, if exceedingly dark, voice among American observers of foreign affairs. His *Balkan Ghosts* was allegedly Bill Clinton's bedside reading and has been widely cited as an unintended inhibition on America's intervention in the wars of Yugoslav succession. *Eastward to Tartary*, which Kaplan introduces as a sequel to *Balkan Ghosts*, covers a sprawling region extending from the southeastern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, to the

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eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, to the desert wastes of the Arabian Peninsula. He has roamed over a three-pronged region he defines as the New Near East, with Turkey at its geographic center, asking weighty questions of everyone from hitchhikers to intelligence agents in his search for insights about everything from national character to national interest. And, as in all of his books, he does this for the purpose of assaying the future.

That future, as Kaplan sees it, is unlikely to be very pretty. Democracy and market institutions require certain attitudes to work well, and those attitudes are scarce in most of the New Near East. He gives timely warning against mistaking the facade of democracy for the real thing, and against outsiders urging systems of governance onto societies not yet ready for them. Overall, Kaplan believes this entire region is in for a long period of bad government and frustrated material prospects.

Kaplan's traveling companions are not the usual headline-seeking hack-pack of parachute journalists, for whom one Sheraton hotel is much the same as another. Rather, we find Kaplan working out of down-market hostels, sniffing around the tangled past, most often in the company of Herodotus and Gibbon as his personal guides to the murky future.

When Kaplan is good, he is very good. His exegesis of why the post-communist societies of Romania and Bulgaria are in danger of being forgotten by the West—because we have "declared" them to be market-driven democracies successfully remade in our own narcissistic image—is right on the money. Kaplan sees a less stable scenario and a different, and deeper, dividing line:

> With Romania's 20 million Orthodox Christians joined to NATO, a civilizational divide at Hungary's eastern border would be unlikely; with Romania outside, such a divide could emerge as the Continent's overriding fact. With Romania absorbed into the West, Europe stretches to the Black Sea; with Romania estranged, Europe becomes a variation of the Holy Roman Empire, while the Balkans rejoin the Near East.

Kaplan also illuminates the danger of a neo-imperialist Russia to countries like Bulgaria or Azerbaijan. The industries of such states are particularly vulnerable to Russian mafia schemes because Western investors deem them too unstable to be attractive, even though it was Western institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that forced these baby-states to privatize and democratize in the first place. According to Kaplan,

> The Washington establishment prefers to simplify its problems by accepting official truths. . . . But the issue [in Bulgaria] was whether democracy would become a convenient mechanism for criminal oligarchy. Political systems are not defined by their labels but by the actual workings of the power relationships within them.

BUT THERE ARE also problems with *Tartary*. Unlike his prescient *Balkan Ghosts*, this book is too diffuse to be much more than what its subtitle suggests: travels in three quite different settings, in which Kaplan relies more on anecdotes and glancing observations than serious investigation conducted over a sustained period. This leads him to produce more in the way of abstract generalizations than interpretations closely bound to his subject.

No matter how many times Kaplan rationalizes his peregrinations as being united by a post-Ottoman Empire imprint, the three distinct geographic areas are connected only by Kaplan's itinerary. What, one might ask, connects an

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analysis of the bizarre personality cult of Saparmurad Niyazov, the Turkmenbashi of Turkmenistan, with the fledgling democracy of Bulgaria under Petar Stoyanov? And what really connects either of these places with the Jordanian monarchy of the late King Hussein, or with the benevolent dictatorship of Eduard Shevardnadze in post-Soviet Georgia? As individual magazine articles published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, each of Kaplan's forays into the obscure and unknown—such as the generally excellent chapter on Georgia—would be enlightening, informative and indeed essential. But if individually his articles represent some sort of Guide to the Perplexed Policymaker, it does not necessarily follow that collectively they make a coherent book.

If Kaplan meant to write a sequel to *Balkan Ghosts* that would explore the post-Ottoman space as a guide to the future, then he should have stuck rigorously to that topic. A study of post-Ottoman statehood should, of course, include the Levantine states of the Middle East ("Greater Syria", in Kaplan's terminology), the Balkans and Turkey. But all the new republics that were once part of the USSR (Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia, for example) should be excluded. They were either never part of the Ottoman Empire, or were part of it only so briefly and marginally that one cannot honestly talk about latent Ottoman patterns of behavior or bureaucracy, such as are arguably shared by the Levantine states and those on the south slope of the Carpathian Mountains. Rather than force the comparison to former Soviet republics, Kaplan might have written two or three different books, each expanded by the sort of sharp detail for which the author is justly known and celebrated.

Paradoxically, and despite its very scope, the book often suffers from tunnel vision. For all the references to Herodotus, Gibbon and a stream of contemporary interlocutors, too many of the insights and experiences seem to have been derived from free associations while looking out the window of a train or bus. Kaplan comes dangerously close here to the hit-and-run approach to the "high journalism" of international affairs that he rightly condemns. For example, crossing from Bulgaria to Turkey, Kaplan is "shocked" to find he must pay $45 for a visa—and then proceeds to read everything into the event, from the legacy of the "brutal five-hundred-year-long occupation of Bulgaria" by the Ottomans to a "larger political story . . . that had not quite made it through the world media filter." Now, for the Turks to impose such a hefty surcharge is hardly the way to promote tourism, to be sure. But the excise, with a floating scale for different nationalities (the visa fee for citizens of Turkey's "traditional rival", Russia, is $10), has nothing to do with Bulgarian-Turkish ties, in history or today; the visa regime was imposed by Ankara in response to restrictions imposed by other countries (such as the United States) on traveling Turks.

And the claim that the fee is part of a "larger story" neglected by the international press is simply nonsense. Kaplan is referring to the "putsch by press conference" by the Turkish military against Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, which was not only widely covered in the mainstream media, but has absolutely nothing to do with Kaplan's forgetting to call the Turkish embassy in Washington about travel information before his trip.

Another kind of tunnel vision is less horizontal than vertical; that is, historical. Kaplan rightly insists that history matters, and that its influence perdures more than many of us care to admit. But one can overdo it, and in *Tartary* Kaplan sometimes does. Citing the authority of

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wise ancients over that of naive contemporary pundits, Kaplan writes,

> Turkish flags flew outside the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations [in Ankara] as if the Turkish Republic drew legitimacy from the record of great empires on its soil. But the objects inside told another lesson: that no system of states is secure, and that ancient history may be as good a guide to the destiny of the Middle East as current media reports. Perhaps more so.

What does Kaplan mean by this? Every museum in the world is the same paradoxical mixture of selectively captured chunks of a glorious past pasted onto an unknowable future. Kaplan really pushes the limits of historical determinism with observations such as this, concerning Turkmenistan:

> What was Parthian was often Greek, just as what was Turkmen was still, after two millennia, Parthian—as I had seen from the gaudy carpets, the clanging jewelry, and the headdresses sold in dusty local bazaars.

Reductio ad absurdum: If Parthian equals Greek and Turkmen equals Parthian, then Turkmen equals Greek—a conclusion that strains more than credulity.

Several factual errors also appear, some minor, some major. Edirne/Adrianople was not the first Ottoman capital; Bursa was. Ferry boats go up to Istanbul on the Bosporus, not the Golden Horn. Heydar Aliyev was brought into the Politburo by Yuri Andropov, not Leonid Brezhnev. The Armenian language is not "akin" to Persian. Azeris did not seize Armenian apartments in 1990 in order to rent them out to expatriate oilmen; there were no expatriate oilmen in the country at the time of the Baku pogroms. While Turks may have turned Armenian churches into stables, no deserted church in Muslim Turkey has ever been turned into a "pigsty." Further, Kaplan is very wrong to say that Turkey has "erased" every Armenian cultural monument in Anatolia; both the ruins of the fabulous city of Ani and the spectacular Agdamar cathedral on an island in Lake Van are advertised on Turkish government billboards as having been built by Armenian dynasties. An ordinary travel writer might get away with the loose use of words like "all" and "every"—but one expects more precision from Kaplan, or at least his policymaking audience should.

This last is a crucial point, especially given the "post-Ottoman" pretensions of *Eastward to Tartary*. There is no question that the "Armenian issue" continues to haunt Turkey. But aside from Ankara's highly negative reaction to attempts by the Armenian diaspora in the United States and Europe to pass congressional and parliamentary resolutions officially acknowledging the genocide of 1915, there has never been so much public and private discussion in Turkey about the events surrounding the creation of the Turkish Republic as in recent years. This forum includes questions of the alleged genocide and the status of the Kurds—and the plethora of other Muslim "minorities" in the country, all previously subsumed under the rubric "Turks." It includes the role of the military in society, corruption in high places, and a whole range of other subjects that were previously kept well under the historical carpet but are now openly aired on a dozen serious discussion programs on privately owned television stations. This is a fascinating story—one that deserves, but does not get, prominent inclusion in the sort of post-Ottoman book that Kaplan set out to write.

Sadly, this tendency to skim the surface of countries he does not know well is nowhere more apparent than in his last chapter on post-Soviet Armenia. His treatment of that state—possibly the

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most complex polity he deals with—is arguably the weakest chapter in the book. Kaplan himself tacitly admits to not getting too far beneath the surface in and around Yerevan. After effectively declaring Armenia to be the only "real" (meaning historically stable) state in the region—thanks largely to its homogenous population, ancient traditions, church and shared memory of surviving national disaster at the hands of the Ottoman Turks—he was caught completely off guard by the October 1999 multiple assassinations in the Armenian parliament, which decimated the government and remain shrouded in the most complex conspiracy theories to this day. "If this could happen in Armenia, I shuddered for the future of Georgia and Azerbaijan, whose systems were more fragile and whose countrysides were in worse disarray", he writes.

Kaplan might well have asked instead why a similar blood bath has not in fact occurred in the Georgian or Azerbaijani parliaments. Might it be that the "cohesiveness" of Armenian society that Kaplan finds so assuring is actually a chimera? Might it be that internecine violence has always been a hallmark of Armenian politics, but not of the politics of Georgia or Azerbaijan? Why attempt to impose a national characteristic where it does not belong? This is especially troubling because Kaplan is one of the few writers in this politically correct age to point out that indeed *there are* national characteristics to reckon with when making a rational assessment of the world. As he writes,

> In many of the places I had visited, national and religious myths were powerful stuff, however manipulated by self-interested politicians they might be. Compassion often didn't reach beyond the extended family and ethnic group. And while individuals were more tangible than the national groups to which they belonged, it did not mean that national character was an illusion, especially in wartime. That is why phrases like *democracy building* and *civil institutions* seem abstract except to the local intellectuals, whom Western diplomats and journalists quote in their reports. . . . Of course, countries are not empty slates full of possibilities: history, culture, and geography really do set limits as to what can be achieved.

Robert Kaplan might consider applying that yardstick more carefully to his next book, and focus on a tighter zone bound by common history, culture and geography. Doing so would allow him to exercise truly his strongest suit: intellectual free association practiced in a rigorously defined setting with which he is intimately familiar. □

Thomas Goltz is author of *Azerbaijan Diary* (M.E. Sharpe, 1998). He is currently at work on a book on the Caucasus.

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Letters

Russia:

Stephen Sestanovich portrays the U.S. government as engaged in a vigorous diplomatic effort to press Russia to rein in its abusive troops in Chechnya ("Where Does Russia Belong?", Winter 2000/01). In response, he claims, Russia took some grudging steps, "and because other steps that were urged (such as launching an effective investigation of atrocities) were not taken, the United States and the EU co-sponsored, and secured passage of, an anti-Russian resolution at the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in April 2000."

But what did that resolution require of the Russians? That they launch an effective investigation of atrocities. Sestanovich not only oversells the Commission resolution, he also neglects to mention that the United States has stood meekly by while Russia has completely ignored the relatively mild demands the resolution did contain.

The resolution called for the creation of a Russian national commission of inquiry, access for UN human rights monitors, and cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe in their efforts to monitor the region. After securing passage of the resolution, President Clinton met four times with Russian President Putin, yet none of those meetings yielded any progress on Russian compliance with the UN demands.

Nearly one year later, no UN monitors have been admitted and a Russian promise to invite the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights back for a visit has not been honored. The OSCE's Assistance Group in Chechnya sits in Moscow, barred from the northern Caucasus. The Council of Europe has a mere three monitors seconded to the staff of the Russian government's human rights envoy for the region. Their work undoubtedly makes some positive contribution to the human rights situation, but they have no authority or capacity to pursue justice.

Most significant, the Russian government has taken no steps to establish a national commission of inquiry. Its prosecutorial authorities have begun some investigations, but made no serious attempt to get to the bottom of the war's worst abuses: the three well-known massacres claiming more than 130 lives; indiscriminate bombing and shelling; and widespread torture. Relatives and witnesses of these atrocities have not been questioned. Bodies have not been exhumed. A number of investigations, hastily commenced once the victims filed suit at the European Court of Human Rights, have been subsequently suspended.

Sestanovich's account of the pressure the United States brought to bear on Russia ends with the UN resolution adopted last April—about the time that the hot war ended in Chechnya and fell off of the front pages. Since that time, Russia has not only thumbed its nose at the UN demands, it has presided over ongoing widespread abuse in Chechnya. Though large-scale bombing has ceased, routine Russian mop-up operations, characterized by arbitrary detention, torture and disappearances, continue to strike fear in the hearts of ordinary Chechens.

When the UN Commission on Human Rights convenes its annual meeting again in March, the United States should take stock of its utter failure to promote accountability and respect for human rights in Chechnya. The past year has proven without a doubt that accountability can-

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not be left to the Russian government. The United States should once again join with the EU to push through a new resolution, this one establishing an international commission of inquiry, empowered to investigate and document atrocities committed by both sides of the conflict in Chechnya.

ELIZABETH ANDERSEN
Europe & Central Asia Division
Human Rights Watch

Sestanovich replies:

Ms. Anderson is right that Russia has ignored international condemnation of its war against the Chechens. She is not right that the U.S. and European governments have "meekly" accepted this state of affairs. (Last November, for example, the OSCE foreign ministers meeting broke down precisely because we and others rejected Russia's insistence that the ministers not issue a critical joint statement on Chechnya.) Whether the Russian government sticks to its guns on this issue depends, of course, on whether it encounters a credible and unified Western position. The UN Human Rights Commission is just one of the forums in which Russia's isolation should be made clear.

Sovereignty:

I have read with interest the article "American Sovereignty and the UN" by Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, in the Winter 2000/01 issue. His observation on the office of the prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia invites a short comment.

My office has *not* conducted an "investigation of alleged NATO war crimes during the Kosovo campaign." Contrary to what the article suggests, I have decided *not* to conduct such an *investigation*.

The tribunal was established by a unanimous Security Council resolution in May 1993, not by the General Assembly or by treaty. The Security Council defined the jurisdiction of the tribunal and its organs through the adoption of a report on its establishment and its statute. The Security Council determined that the jurisdiction of the tribunal extends to the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo included, and that its temporal jurisdiction is open-ended until the Security Council decides otherwise. My predecessor, Justice Louise Arbour of Canada, felt obliged at the outset of the Kosovo operation to remind states that the Security Council had not changed the scope of the tribunal's jurisdiction in connection with that operation in a way that would place some serious violations of international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the former Yugoslavia outside the tribunal's mandate.

When Justice Arbour received reports addressed specifically to our office alleging that war crimes were committed by NATO forces during the Kosovo operation, she was obliged to *preliminarily assess the accuracy and seriousness of that information.* She ordered the commencement of such an assessment, the conclusion of which was that *no investigation was required.* Had Justice Arbour not ordered such a preliminary assessment, she would not have fulfilled her obligations under the statute, and, as such, she would have undermined both the legitimacy and efficacy of the Security Council's international judicial intervention through the establishment of the tribunal. Operating outside or in contravention of the statute would put at risk the powers that the Security Council has endowed the tribunal with under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. It is precisely these powers that have enabled the tribunal to make such dramatic progress in its efforts to bring to justice those individuals from the former Yugoslavia who are responsible for serious violations of minimum standards for civilized conduct in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. Without those powers, and the continued support from the Security Council, its member states and other states, the tribunal would not succeed in bringing fugitives such as Ratko Mladic, Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic to justice.

CARLA DEL PONTE
Prosecutor, International
Criminal Tribunal for the
Former Yugoslavia

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In his article on sovereignty and the UN, Senator Jesse Helms tagged a very important issue: "There is only one source of legitimacy of the U.S. government's policies—and that is the consent of the American people." And yet of equal importance are the knowledge and attitudes of the American people and their leaders. . . .

A lack of concern among the general population with regard to foreign policy coexists with the fact that . . . there are those out there within the government who would like to see further U.S. involvement in the UN and globalization, despite what costs to sovereignty there might be. This will further entangle the United States in UN directives. This is not a process that happens overnight, for that would unquestionably elicit the negative reaction of the American people of which the Senator spoke. But with the UN's slow and steady progress through such claims as being the "sole source of legitimacy" and creating institutions such as the International Criminal Court—all with U.S. approval—*that* kind of change may be right around the corner.

Since the publication of the Senator's article, the United States has signed the Rome treaty of the International Criminal Court. A UN press release of January 2 stated, "The Secretary-General . . . is well aware of the difficulties that the President of the United States faced in reaching this decision, and warmly congratulates him on his courage and far-sightedness in overcoming them."

"Far-sightedness" indeed. Maybe just far-sighted enough to eventually look past the national rights and interests of the American people.

W.J. GRIMES
Undergraduate,
Texas Christian University

Senator Helms replies:

In the very same breath, Ms. Del Ponte asserts (a) that her tribunal did not investigate NATO, and (b) it was fully authorized to do so. She is wrong on both counts.

In arguing that the Yugoslav tribunal did not "investigate" NATO, Ms. Del Ponte is using an argument familiar to most Americans: it "depends on what the meaning of 'is' is." Whether she calls it an "investigation" or an "assessment" is irrelevant because the facts are clear: the Yugoslav tribunal spent many months examining specific allegations of alleged NATO war crimes (submitted by a group of self-proclaimed human rights advocates), and then conducted a written interrogation of NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson, requiring him to answer these specious charges to the tribunal's satisfaction.

Lord Robertson (to the consternation of many in NATO) set a very dangerous precedent by cooperating—accepting for the first time the jurisdiction of an international criminal tribunal to sit in judgment of NATO service members and officials, including Americans. But no international court has the power to indict and try American service members and officials without the consent of the American people—and none ever will.

This experience shows why the creation of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) is such a dangerous idea. At least Ms. Del Ponte is answerable to the Security Council, which is the source of her mandate. An independent ICC prosecutor, answerable to no state or institution for his or her actions, would have no such constraints and would be free to launch whatever investigations he or she pleases. Such a global star chamber must not be permitted to come into existence—and the Yugoslav tribunal has shown us precisely why.

Germany:

Robert B. Zoellick's insightful article, "Two Plus Four: The Lessons of German Unification" (Fall 2000), serves as an invaluable summary of perhaps the most daring and fascinating U.S. power play of our time—one that in October 1990 not only changed the face of divided Germany but of divided Europe. As a Bush administration insider, Zoellick provides a detailed political and philosophical background of a cause that was as much contested by

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the Soviet Union as by our allies. . . .

Nonetheless, some of Zoellick's omissions are astonishing. Among them is the important role of Vernon Walters, who eventually served as George Bush's ambassador to Bonn. Long before the fall of the Berlin Wall, General Walters predicted German unification and engaged in its advancement behind the scenes, when skeptical politicians and experts here and in Germany shrugged off such prognostications as wishful thinking.

Another oversight concerns the "Two plus Four" unification scenario outlined by Viola Drath in "The Reemergence of the German Question", published in the October 1988 newsletter of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, the New York think tank founded by Hans J. Morgenthau. In her assessment of the fluid situation in Central Europe and Germany as "Volk der Mitte", courted by General Secretary Gorbachev's new thinking about a "common European house", Drath urged Washington to a counter-initiative: a "discussion of a German peace conference to be composed of both German states and the representatives of the four victorious allies." It was the first time that the "Two plus Four" concept had been seen in print. Still in manuscript form, Drath submitted her analyses to Dennis Ross, who was in charge of foreign policy planning in the Bush campaign. Drath, a German-American journalist and academic, had been invited by Vice President Bush's chief of staff Don Gregg to join the Bush campaign in September of 1987. In recognition for her contribution Ross recommended Drath as alternative representative to the United Nations.

The contributions to German unification by these pioneers and others may not be measurable. But it would have been refreshing had Zoellick awarded Vernon Walters and Viola Drath at least a footnote.

WILLIAM DWYER II, Esq.
Washington, DC

Human Nature:

It is hard to know whether Robin Fox has his tongue firmly planted in his cheek ("Human Nature and Human Rights", Winter 2000/01), particularly when he observes that "a very good case could be made . . . [for] the right to polygamy" in a magazine not noted for its licentiousness. On the assumption that he means what he says, however, his contention that the term "human" is wrongly applied to rights cries out for a response.

In a few respects Fox has it exactly right: there *is* massive confusion as to the philosophical basis for human rights and too often human rights advocates *do* frame their arguments in strictly moral terms, much to those arguments' occasional detriment. But instead of dispelling the confusion Fox adds to it by his conflation of the notions of "natural rights" and "human rights."

In the first place, while of course some human rights advocates base their defense of rights on natural law, this is far from the universal or even most common basis for understanding the nature of rights. A simple glance at the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the document that grounds most other human rights covenants and treaties) reveals the straw man Fox has tried to set on fire.

The first five "Whereas" clauses lay out the rationale for the list of rights to follow. The first clause refers to "the inherent dignity . . . of all members of the human family", a reference that might be ascribable to natural law doctrine, if it were not regarded merely as "poetry", but even this clause goes on to argue for recognition of that dignity on the pragmatic grounds that it leads to "freedom, justice and peace." The second "Whereas" notes that violations of rights have resulted in acts that have "outraged the conscience of mankind", a simple statement of fact following the Holocaust. The third advocates rights in order to obviate the need for revolution; the fourth in order to promote "friendly relations between nations"; and the fifth in order to "promote social progress." One can certainly disagree with any of these assertions but there is nary a natural law argument among

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them. Indeed, as Paul Gordon Lauren so ably lays out in his history of the writing of the Universal Declaration (*The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen*), the composers largely avoided basing the Declaration on either religious or natural law grounds exactly because they could come to no common agreement on these matters.

To challenge contemporary notions of human rights, then, because they may be at odds with various "theories" of what is "natural" (and it is exactly because basic kin selection theory and all the rest are no more than theories that natural law philosophy lies in such philosophical tatters when it comes to making it the grounds for any ethical system) is to elevate a chimera to the level of a debate that is not taking place. "Human rights" refers to "humans' rights", "the rights of humans", something human beings possess or can claim, but not necessarily something derived from the nature of the claimant any more than "Robin's article", an article written by Robin, requires that we come to an agreement about what kind of person he is. Rights are in fact often understood as providing the boundaries or limits to acceptable human behavior, be that behavior prompted by "human nature" or human choices.

Ultimately Fox even acknowledges as much by granting that "Human rights theorists . . . often . . . disclaim any attempt to base . . . rights on human nature or human needs and define them as 'the best to which we can aspire', or as based on 'a moral vision of a dignified human life.'" And that kind of philosophical pragmatism is exactly what most human rights advocates would claim. "But how do we choose between competing aspirations?", Fox asks. The answer is that the nations of the world, through the adoption of treaties or the decisions of international judicial bodies, articulate at different levels of consensus the evolving standards of what constitutes acceptable behavior. This may seem "squishy" but notions of acceptable behavior have always been subject to changing mores. Were they not, slavery would still be considered an acceptable form of social organization to vast majorities of the world's people, as it was 200 years ago. And even if one believes that slavery is somehow a "natural state", do we really want to say its abolition may be "unsustainable, however ethically desirable"?

Fox's major disservice to the cause of clarity, however, is that he leaps to indict his erroneously conceived notion of human rights for the deaths of 1,000 people in Serbia, a potential war with China and God knows what else. Even if one grants that the pursuit of human rights is responsible for these consequences—a dubious proposition—what are we to make of the fact that 150 million people have died in this century alone thanks to governments ignoring human rights claims and pursuing what they perceived to be in the "national interest"? Daniel Patrick Moynihan may have utilized human rights rhetoric in the pursuit of political advantage, but today his strategy appears a prescient one, for in as globally intertwined a world as this one, to ignore human rights claims is to jeopardize not only our national security but our economic, environmental and public health as well.

WILLIAM F. SCHULZ
Executive Director
Amnesty International USA

Fox replies:

Mr. Schulz's letter seems like one of those hurriedly-penned replies by those with an axe to grind and a turf to protect. I was simply trying to illustrate my contention that there was a lot more to the "human" in "human rights" than is granted in the prevalent philosophy. I added that the current lists are deliberately skewed in the direction of the features of human nature favored by those doing the listing. Mr. Schulz admits this, but proclaims it a virtue. That is his privilege. Human rights, he says, should not be derived from "natural rights" but from the prevailing consensus of the aspirants. I disagree for the reasons stated in the article. That is my privilege. He perfectly illustrates my point with his arrogant condemnation of the human millions engaged in polygamous marriages as "licentious." These law-abiding, hard-working, peaceful

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people, striving to do their best for spouses and children, thus know what to expect from the leading spokesman for "human rights." I rest my case.

China:

Richard K. Betts and Thomas J. Christensen, in their article "China: Getting the Questions Right" (Winter 2000/01), have done the Lord's work in moving the argument about the "China threat" beyond the depositions of the so-called "panda huggers" (appeasers) and "China bashers" (war mongers). These two groups have clouded the issue by kicking up an emotional storm about China. Unfortunately, these emotional factors have been characteristic of U.S.-China relations for the last 150 years. Wars in Korea and Vietnam, and violent demonstrations such as the Boxers in 1900 and the assault on the U.S. embassy in 1999 after the accidental Belgrade bombing, aggravated these emotions. They feed nationalistic emotions among Chinese of all stripes and upset Americans from human rights activists to the religious Right.

Betts and Christensen say calm down, try to think carefully about the vast complexities of our relationship, and the calculations that go into forming courses of action. The Chinese have to consider many of the same realities as we do when planning military actions. But the key question, I believe—and the authors do deal with this but largely in generalities—is: Will China's first priority of economic development and its critical influence on domestic social stability curtail its oft-stated reliance on military force? Or will economic development enhance China's comprehensive national power and thus contribute to some of China's more unhealthy goals, such as dominating the South China Sea, taking over Taiwan by force, or grabbing the Senkaku Islands from Japan?

The authors tell the United States to beware of quick military fixes that might provide short-term relief and even victory, but in the long term stir the giant into a crusade of hate against us, tying us down for decades in hostility and confrontation. What the authors do not write about is the Chinese fixation on the United States as the imperialist hegemon, the new Hitler, the arrogant superpower and the greatest danger to world peace. Talk is cheap but the drumbeat of their propaganda does not advance the cause of managing our problems with a cool head, and achieving down-to-earth practical concessions by both sides. In summary, the article is brilliant and necessary—and I hope the Chinese leadership reads it.

JAMES LILLEY
American Enterprise Institute

Nasty Little Wars:

It was a pleasure to read Anatol Lieven's fine piece, "Nasty Little Wars", in the Winter 2000/01 issue. However, having observed from close up the strange goings on within the U.S. military over the past five years, I believe that things are even worse than he suggests. There is increasing complacency within the Services, with the possible exception of the Marines, that they have found the silver technological bullet; that the profession of arms does not require serious study of history and literature; and that America possesses the finest military in the world that can swiftly and painlessly (from our point of view) take apart any conceivable opponent from afar.

Even more distressing has been the surrender of all historical consciousness in the U.S. military in favor of social science nostrums about leadership and the use of force. Here the army has led the charge, trashing its own glorious past in favor of "new" social science paradigms of leadership that would have prevented virtually every single great general or admiral in American history from attaining leadership positions.

Even more worrisome than the trends within the military is what has been occurring in American society. The World War II generation, which over the past half century provided an anchor of common sense in the American polity, is now passing on. It had a deep understanding of what the isolationism of the 1920s and 1930s had cost its generation.

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Its replacement is a new generation of comfortable, middle- and upper-class Americans, fully in touch with their inner feelings but incapable of comprehending the external world, because, as Robert Kaplan has suggested, they not only lack direct experience with tragedy, but their educational system at every level has removed the "tragic" from their study of literature and history. As Lieven has written elsewhere, the Chechens are fully comprehensible to those who have read Herodotus, Euripides, Tacitus or Gibbon, but not to the students of a willful cultural myopia. And sometime in the future, warriors like the Chechens are coming to visit you, America!

WILLIAMSON MURRAY
Burke, VA

Confusions:

In discussing the Oslo "peace" plan, Adam Garfinkle asserts that Israel is better off having gone through the Oslo exercise ("Jumping to Confusions", Winter 2000/01).

We at Americans For a Safe Israel disagree strongly with Dr. Garfinkle and believe that Israel is fighting for its life today because of the damage done by Oslo. The terrorism, the radicalization of the Arab in the streets, the building up of a 40,000-man armed Palestinian Authority force within Israel, and the ensuing loss of morale among the Israeli public are all the outgrowth of the disastrous Oslo process. There is little wonder that observers like Norman Podhoretz, Charles Krauthammer, George Will and Cal Thomas have begun to question Israel's ability to survive.

Dr. Garfinkle states that "anyone who claims now to have known for certain . . . how the peace process would turn out is not to be taken seriously." On the contrary, we maintain that any objective observer would have seen what we wrote about beginning October 1993 in our monthly publication, *Outpost*. All our articles pointed to the glaringly obvious fact that the so-called peace process was an empty sham.

HERBERT ZWEIBON
Americans For a Safe Israel

◆

It looks like Adam Garfinkle has been confused by the matter of facts that are so apparent about the genocide in Kosovo that he openly claims there never existed anything like that but merely a "very brutal pre-twentieth century-style land grab." The author certainly is right in claiming that the Balkans never have been a sphere of vital American interest, but downplaying the whole intervention by a Washington-led NATO that undeniably brought Milosevic's murder machine to a halt comes as a big surprise to me. Maybe a re-evaluation of facts would be helpful here.

Just this remark on an article in the latest issue of *The National Interest*, which I very much appreciate as a student of international affairs.

MARC KLEY
University of Bonn

Garfinkle replies:

Herbert Zweibon is entitled to his opinion about the Oslo process, but his arguments are not persuasive. It requires a poor memory to blame the Oslo process for terrorism and Arab radicalism; both long predate September 1993. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority's 40,000-man police force is not in Israel proper, nor is Israel fighting for its life. No responsible adult in Israel, of any political persuasion or party, thinks that Palestinian Authority forces represent an existential threat to Israel. Finally, if it was obvious from the start that Oslo was "an empty sham", then why has the great majority of Israeli Jews thought otherwise?

As to Mr. Kley's complaint, no, the facts are not at issue, but the careful use of language is. *Pace* Mr. Kley, genocide is not a synonym for mass murder. Genocide is the attempt to exterminate an entire people, and such an attempt typically focuses on murdering women and children above all. That is why of the six million Jews who died in the Nazi Holocaust, one and a half million were children. Serbian depravities, horrid as they have been, have aimed instead at killing men of military service age and driving away others from their lands. If Mr. Kley cannot see the differ-

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ence between these phenomena then I am sorry for him.

German Fictions:

There are several points in Stefan Sullivan's comment and Jacob Heilbrunn's reply that I think need clarification ("German Fictions: An Exchange", Winter 2000/01).

The suffering of the Germans did not end with World War II. Between 1944 and 1950, fifteen million Germans were ethnically cleansed from former German territories in Silesia, Prussia, Pomerania, the Sudetenland and southeastern Europe. Millions ended up not only losing homes and property but also their lives. Large numbers were deported into Stalin's gulag as slave labor. For those interested in this best kept secret, I recommend James Bacque's *Crimes and Mercies: The Fate of German Civilians Under Allied Occupation, 1944-1950* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1997).

The West was co-conspirator with Stalin at Potsdam in this—one of the greatest war crimes in modern times. It demonstrated for all and sundry to what depths the West was ready and willing to sink to appease Uncle Joe. This precedent in my view set the stage for the Palestinian refugee problem as well as the Kosovo debacle.

There have been no reparations or indeed recognition of the injustice perpetrated. In the case of the Czech Republic, the Benes Decrees that "legalized" this action in Czechoslovakia are still on the books today.

In Heilbrunn's reply he leaves the reader with the impression that the unfortunate fire bombing of the synagogue in Düsseldorf was perpetrated by patriotic or conservative elements. Wrong: turns out that the crime was committed by two immigrants from the Middle East. The press in Germany, in typical knee-jerk fashion, went off half-cocked along with the left-wing government and called for outlawing the National Democratic Party. This party has been around for decades and conducted itself legally. Another fine example of upholding Western democratic values: If you don't like a party, outlaw it.

A similar reaction was observed in the case of the unfortunate drowning death of a six year-old boy in Sebnitz by skinheads. Before the case was fully investigated, the government and the press went into their usual witch hunt mode against right-wingers. The entire town was condemned; reputations were ruined and young kids taken into custody in the process. Now it turns out that the whole thing was an accident, with the parents implicated as giving false testimony to the police.

The problem for the German government is the sinking economy. The government is using McCarthyite tactics against legitimate conservative political parties to shift the focus of the people away from what concerns them most.

MICHAEL L. REISCH
Carlisle, MA

American Wars:

Thomas Donnelly's "comparison of three American wars" makes the valuable point that having clear political goals helps to secure good outcomes when force is used ("Lessons Unlearned: A Comparison of Three American Wars", Summer 2000). He errs, however, in implying that outcomes follow inevitably from goals, and in arguing that policymakers should formulate strategy without special concern for political constraints. This, along with a misunderstanding of the determinants of success, leads him to erroneous conclusions about goals to be pursued in future U.S. military operations.

Donnelly's preferred "template" is Operation Just Cause, and this is an unfortunate choice. Design and planning were not nearly as important to victory in Panama as were the obvious nature of the goals, the modest capabilities of our opponent, and the vast means at our disposal.

Forcing political change was easy against a leader with limited resources, in a country with an established political opposition, and in a region where we have long had extensive influence. This ability to effect a change of leadership led to a happy coincidence of

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politico-strategic and military-operational goals, for once it was decided to change the Panamanian government, the method became obvious: get rid of Noriega.

Such a "snatch" or decapitation operation has no analogue in the case of Iraq, for example. There was no organized opposition in Iraq, no democratic tradition, and no long-term U.S. presence. There was, on the other hand, a need first to eject the world's fourth-largest army from occupied Kuwait. Around the Canal Zone, by contrast, there was no danger of a serious conventional war, no problem of regional basing, and no danger of defections from an alliance. Most important, virtually the entire infrastructure of modern military operations was resident in-country. The sheer number of aircraft, air fields and intelligence assets meant that *any* plan was likely to succeed. Such an overwhelming local conventional superiority will not be seen again unless Mexico decides to invade Texas and California.

Donnelly's concentration on factors other than the true determinants of success leads him to the conclusion that the strategic goals of military intervention should be limited only for "tactical or operational reasons." This conclusion is dangerous, as is his emphasis on the supposed wisdom of lower-level warfighters—who will always and quite reasonably prefer fewer to greater constraints. His call for "boldness" would be more persuasive if he had considered the strategic risks of operationally bold military plans.

All of this should be borne in mind when analyzing the Kosovo air war. Donnelly is correct to criticize the folly of removing the ground option at the outset, but a Panama-like military plan would have been as foolhardy against Milosevic as against Saddam. And if the United States had presented NATO with the kind of initial target list that Donnelly suggests, there would have been no war at all. Political constraints are real, and they matter in military outcomes. Panama is one for the history books, not for the general staff briefing books of the future.

JOHN GAROFANO
JFK School of Government
Harvard University

Donnelly replies:

Dr. Garofano's letter is a perfect specimen of the watery "realism" that has infected post-Cold War U.S. policy-making. We may have swept the Soviet Union into the dustbin of history; and it may be decades before the Chinese are fully ready to challenge us directly, but all Garofano can see is "political constraints." I do not argue that we are entirely unconstrained, but by historical standards we are remarkably free to forge the shape of international politics.

Garofano completely misunderstands my argument about Operation Just Cause. It was no "snatch" operation; it was rather a much larger effort to root out the Panamanian Defense Forces' (PDF) iron grip on Panama's politics. Moreover, he misunderstands the Gulf War. The United States and its coalition partners enjoyed superiority over Iraq that was equally as devastating as over the PDF, although on a larger scale. We had it well within our means to change the regime in Baghdad, we simply chose not to.

A more rapid and decisive result in Kosovo was likewise within our grasp. As the Gulf War proved, determined U.S. leadership is the strongest factor in allies' actions. We must learn to differentiate between external and self-imposed constraints. □

Letters to the Editor

We welcome brief comments (under 300 words) from our readers. Due to space constraints, all letters are subject to editorial revision. Remarks should be addressed to the Editor and sent to:

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The Anglosphere Illusion

Owen Harries

DURING RECENT months, many have engaged in the pastime of looking back to the beginning of the twentieth century to find parallels with our present circumstances. Thus the position of Britain then—both with respect to its dominance and the first signs of its decline—has been compared to that of the United States today; the significance of the rise of Germany back then has been compared to the anticipated emergence of China as a genuine world power in the near future; and Norman Angell's belief—given expression on the eve of the outbreak of the Great War—that interdependence was rendering war obsolete has been seen as the equivalent of the current faith in the pacific effects of globalization and the spread of democracy.

There is one other parallel that deserves mention. Today, a few thoughtful and eloquent individuals—among them Robert Conquest, writing in the pages of this magazine, and John O'Sullivan in various journals—have been making the case for an English-speaking political union. The argument is that the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and a few other smaller entities have so much in common in terms of political culture, values and institutions that they should draw together and enter into some sort of formal arrangement to act in concert—to create, that is, what some are now referring to as a political "Anglosphere."

Now this line of argument almost exactly replicates one advanced by a group of highly intelligent, well-educated and well-connected young men at the beginning of the last century. The group—sometimes known as Milner's Kindergarten, after its patron, Lord Milner, and sometimes as the Cliveden Set, because of its connection with the Astor family—included among others Philip Kerr (later, as Lord Lothian, Britain's ambassador to Washington during World War II), Lionel Curtis (founder of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House) and Geoffrey Dawson (to be for twenty-six years editor of the *Times*, when that newspaper still had great political influence).

The historian Norman Rose has recently written about this group in terms that could be applied almost word for word to today's advocates of an English-speaking union:

> What they meant by 'doing things in the world' was primarily to sustain the Anglo-Saxon fraternity. Dedicated to an intimate partnership between the Dominions and Britain, perhaps federation or even union, and

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a strengthening of the Anglo-American connection, they aimed in this way to preserve Britain's distinctive role in international affairs.

The similarity extends also to what they disliked and feared:

> For Kerr and his friends, France was the bogeyman of Europe. There was an almost paranoid fear that scheming French politicians would embroil Britain in disputes at variance with its genuine interests.[1]

The ideas propounded by the group reflected both the reality of British imperial power and the fear that, unless girded up, that power was doomed to decline in the not too distant future. This view of things had enough appeal that at the grand intergovernmental Imperial Conference of 1911 a proposal was made—it was formally put by Joseph Ward, prime minister of New Zealand, the smallest and most British of the English-speaking Dominions—for an Imperial Parliament, to be responsible for formulating common foreign and defense policies for the Empire.

The proposal was promptly shot down by Canada and South Africa, both of whom had substantial non-English populations that were not susceptible to the charms of Anglo-Saxon tradition. Indeed, while such an arrangement would have served the interests of Britain, as the strongest party, it was inimical to the quickly strengthening national sentiments of countries that had only just moved from subservient status to independence.

Values and Interests

IF THE IDEA of an English-speaking union, based on a common heritage and shared values, was not a goer in 1911, what are its prospects today? A consideration of that question can, it seems to me, usefully begin by considering an episode that occurred almost exactly midway between the Imperial Conference of 1911 and the present: that is the Suez crisis of 1956.

Recall that this crisis erupted a mere decade after the end of World War II. Those Americans and Britons who had worked so closely together to win that war were still running things: Dwight Eisenhower and his generation in Washington; Anthony Eden and his in London. Britain still possessed a vast empire and very substantial armed forces based on compulsory national service. Britain and France were America's principal allies—indeed its only significant ones. The Cold War was going strong. Within a year the Soviet Union would put Sputnik into space, shaking American confidence seriously.

In that year, 1956, the Egyptian military dictator, Gamal Abdel Nasser, seized the Suez Canal from the company that owned it and proceeded to nationalize it. Both the British and French regarded this as an outrageously immoral act. Even worse, they believed it a serious threat to their strategic interests. The British, still having substantial colonial holdings in Southeast Asia, close links with Australia and New Zealand, and a vital interest in Middle East oil, regarded the canal as the "jugular vein" of their imperial system, and Nasser's actions as entirely unacceptable.

After some futile negotiation, the British and French, acting in collusion with Israel, decided to seize the Canal back from Nasser. They did so in secret—partly to maintain military surprise, partly because they believed that the United States would be unsympathetic to what they were doing. They acted—very slowly and very ineptly it has to be said—but

[1]Rose, *The Cliveden Set: Portrait of an Exclusive Fraternity* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), pp. 45, 131.

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before they achieved their goal the United States publicly denounced their action and led its condemnation at the UN. Even more decisively, by manipulating the currency and oil markets to create a crisis for Britain and France, and by using the U.S. Sixth Fleet to harass the Anglo-French task force as it approached Port Said, Washington forced the abandonment of the military expedition. The upshot was that these two principal allies of the United States, which were also two of the world's leading democracies, were very publicly humiliated before the eyes of the world. It was a truly traumatic event, especially for the British, whose pretensions to still being a great global power were never to recover.

Why did the United States act as it did? From a mixture of motives. Partly it was a long-standing distaste for and suspicion of European imperialism, of which this crisis was seen as a clear example. Partly it was a Cold War concern not to alienate the Arab countries and drive them into Moscow's arms. Partly it was a realpolitik concern to displace the British and French as the main influence over the oil-producing countries. Partly it was because of the complicating factor of the Hungarian rising, which coincided with the Suez crisis. And, not least, partly it was that the whole thing happened in the middle of a U.S. presidential campaign, which made it more than usually necessary for the Eisenhower administration to appear whiter than white in terms of high principle and clean hands. (Not long after the event, Selwyn Lloyd, the British foreign minister, was to be left gasping in astonishment when John Foster Dulles, the U.S. secretary of state, blandly asked him, *"Selwyn, Why did you stop? Why didn't you go through with it and get Nasser down?"* A real case of adding insult to injury, one might think.)

I have recounted this episode at length because it seems to me to bear on our theme in two very illuminating respects. First, it happened at a time when the political and cultural ties between the United States and the United Kingdom were very much stronger than they are now. Only a little more than a decade earlier, Britain had hosted over a million U.S. troops on its soil for an extended period; British troops had fought under American generals and Americans under British generals, in what was an extraordinarily intimate arrangement. As well as all that, in 1956 the United States still had what it no longer has: a WASP establishment, with all that meant in terms of tastes and values and affinities. There was no such thing as multiculturalism to cloud the issue; no doubt concerning the superiority of that cultural tradition which derived from America's English origins and which the two countries had in common.

The point is that even in those exceptional circumstances, cultural affinities and shared traditions were not enough to ensure common foreign policy goals, to override hard calculations of national interests. Indeed, that should have become apparent to the British several years earlier, when Harry Truman had abruptly cut off Lend-Lease to Britain almost as soon as the war ended, and when the United States had driven a very hard bargain indeed with Maynard Keynes concerning a loan to prevent the United Kingdom, bled white by a war it had fought from beginning to end, from going bankrupt.

Now if that were true nearly half a century ago, how much truer is it today, when the common culture, political and otherwise, that is being appealed to as the basis of association or unity is so much more attenuated—by massive immigration on both sides of the Atlantic of peoples who are unacquainted with that cultural tradition; by a strident and aggressive multiculturalism that insists that the Anglo-Saxon culture and tradi-

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tion are no better than any other culture and tradition; and, not least, by educational establishments that do not regard the transmission of a cultural heritage as one of their responsibilities.

In these circumstances, it is surely a serious error to believe that a traditional culture is capable of providing the foundation for a worldwide English-speaking union. After all, in the face of the reckless policies of Tony Blair—whom I have characterized elsewhere as the British Gorbachev, in that he believes that statesmanship consists of taking flying leaps into the future without any clear idea of where one will land—that tradition and that political culture are proving incapable of keeping even the United Kingdom united. Already the term "British" has a diminished application.

Please understand that I am in no way criticizing the United States in pointing these things out. I do so only to try to contest the argument—advanced by some of the most eloquent advocates of an English-speaking union—that cultural compatibility can and should form the basis of a common foreign policy. It cannot. Was it Nietzsche or was it De Gaulle who described states as "cold monsters"? In any case it was Britain's own Lord Palmerston who insisted that

> We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.

That unsentimental formulation is well known. What is perhaps less well known is that Palmerston was doing no more than paraphrasing something said several generations earlier by another statesman. George Washington, in his Farewell Address of 1796, had said:

> The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.

Any case for a foreign policy union or association of English-speaking peoples will have to be made in terms, not of culture, but of the national interests of the parties involved, and those interests will have to be continually re-interpreted and recalculated as circumstances change.

Bandwagoning and Balancing

THE SECOND point to make about the Suez crisis is that, immediately after it, the French and the British did make such a recalculation—and drew diametrically different policy conclusions from the experience. The French conclusion was that never again should they depend on the Americans. There thus began the pattern of—from an American point of view—infuriating French behavior as a prickly, independent, ungrateful, undependable, critical associate of the United States, always concerned with creating arrangements that would lessen its dependence on American power and challenge the dominance of Washington.

The conclusion drawn by the British, on the other hand, was utterly different. It was that never again must they get on the wrong side of the Americans; that the idea of trying to act as an independent force, or with partners other than the Americans, was not a good one. In his inquest on the Suez venture, prepared in 1957 for the chiefs of staff, General Keightley, the commander of the Anglo-French Force, concluded that "it was the action of the United States which really defeated us in attaining our object. . . . This situation with the United States must at all costs be prevented from arising

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again."[2] All subsequent prime ministers have concurred.

Theorists of international relations have coined the term "bandwagoning" to describe the policy of states attaching themselves to a dominant power, accepting its leadership and adopting its policies in the hope of sharing the benefits accruing from its dominance. Ever since Suez, Britain has been the biggest practitioner of bandwagoning in our time—though it has gone to great trouble to disguise the fact and to preserve its dignity by much talk about Greeks and Romans, and a special relationship.

In fairness, it should be said that as long as the Cold War was a going concern, this policy was a sensible one, since the United States and Britain agreed on the fundamental and overriding goal of containing, frustrating and, if possible, defeating the evil empire. Any differences were confined to second- and third-order questions. But since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower, things have become a bit more complicated.

Bandwagoning with one superpower to thwart another and much less attractive superpower was one thing; bandwagoning with the sole superpower, the undisputed hegemon, is quite another. It goes against the long-established British tradition of attempting to balance—either alone or by the creation of a coalition—any power that is, or threatens to be, dominant. This, the classic principle of balance of power, has been the central tenet of British policy for the last four centuries. Its logic has been summed up succinctly by the Israeli statesman, Abba Eban: "The alternative to a balance of power is an imbalance of power, which has usually provoked wars and has never consolidated peace."

Why has Britain now abandoned the principle of balance in the case of American hegemony? Several reasons suggest themselves. One is the sheer force of habit acquired over the decades of World War II and the Cold War (and the importance of habit in politics is something never to be underestimated, particularly in the case of people who don't think very much). A second is the complicating factor, already discussed, of a shared political culture and language, which encourages ways of thinking about the relationship that are different from the realism of power politics. A third is Britain's European dilemma—in? out? halfway in? or what?—which makes the U.S. connection especially attractive, in that it can be taken to extend the range of available options, and get Britain off the hook of opting for either complete immersion in Europe or isolation on its fringe. And then there is the widely accepted, and comforting, belief that while non-democratic hegemons are nasty brutes, to be viewed with the greatest suspicion, democratic ones are benign and non-threatening (at least as far as other democracies are concerned) and therefore do not need to be balanced.

No doubt all these factors have played a part. The crucial question is: Will the policy of giving an overriding precedence to the American connection serve British interests? The answer, I'm afraid, is up to a point, yes and no, or it all depends. If Britain tries to make culture and values do the work that only national interests can do, it will fail for the reasons I have already outlined. Again, if Britain assumes an identity of interests between itself and the United States, it will be disappointed. The interests of the United States are truly global, those of Britain regional. For Britain, its relationship with the United States is paramount; for the United States, its relationship with Britain is only

[2]Peter Hennessy, *The Prime Minister: The Office and its Holders Since 1945* (London: Penguin Press, 2000), p. 244.

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one among many, and, necessarily given Britain's comparative weight, less important than some others. In the next few decades it is almost certain that East Asia—China, Japan, the Koreas (soon perhaps reduced to the singular)—is going to loom larger in American calculations than any other part of the world. Britain will play no significant part in that unfolding drama.

Even in the case of Europe, where both countries have very serious interests, the problems for Britain and the United States are very different. For the former, the question of how to relate to the changes occurring in Europe is urgent and sharply divisive domestically. How it is answered could result in political exclusion from a region in which Britain has been intimately involved ever since it came into existence—or, on the other hand, in its inclusion in a political entity run on lines largely incompatible with its own political culture and obnoxious to many in Britain.

None of this applies to the United States. Washington may or may not have been clever in encouraging European unity over the last five decades, but the emergence of a united Europe is not going to constitute an unmanageable, life-threatening problem for it. Given the distance it is behind currently, and given its terrible demographics and the problems inherent in keeping a necessarily fragile unity intact, Europe is not going to be a serious power rival to America. And given its *dirigiste*, welfare-oriented, protectionist inclinations, it is unlikely to constitute an economic threat that a market-oriented United States cannot handle.

Indeed, it should be acknowledged that, from an American point of view, from here on the worst outcome of the European venture might well be its catastrophic failure. For it has been an elite-run project, carried on in the face of popular hostility or indifference, and if it should collapse, the current political elites of Europe would be thoroughly discredited. As Henry Kissinger has observed, this in turn would open the door to extremists of both the Left and Right, who would be unpleasant—though again not life-threatening—for America to live with. Already, many in Europe see the United States as a domineering, interfering hyperpower, endangering not only the interests but the identity of Europe. How much stronger would these sentiments be in an atmosphere poisoned by a sense of failure and impotence?

Britain has declined to act in its traditional role of balance maintainer with respect to the United States. Could that change? Traditionally, such balancing was done by the creation of coalitions; but there is no way that Britain is going to join with France (or Europe) and Russia and China against the United States. I would like to suggest, however, that there is another way in which Britain could act as a balancer: a balancer from within the camp of the dominant power rather than from without. Or, to change the metaphor, if it is going to stay on the bandwagon it could perform the valuable function of urging the need for careful steering and a judicious use of the brakes.

The British should reflect on the experience of their own country as the only hegemon that did not attract a hostile coalition against itself. It avoided that fate by showing great restraint, prudence and discrimination in the use of its power in the main political arena—by generally standing aloof and restricting itself to the role of balancer of last resort. In doing so it was heeding the warning given it by Edmund Burke, just as its era of supremacy was beginning:

> Among precautions against ambition it may not be amiss to take one precaution against our own. I must fairly say, I dread our *own* power and our *own* ambition; I dread our

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being too much dreaded. . . . We may say that we shall not abuse this astonishing and hitherto unheard of power. But every other nation will think we shall abuse it. It is impossible but that, sooner or later, this state of things must produce a combination against us which may end in our ruin.[3]

I believe that the United States is now in dire need of such a warning. A decade ago, Margaret Thatcher admirably urged a hesitant President Bush to take decisive action in the Gulf. It was the right thing to do, given the vital importance of the Gulf, the uncertainty accompanying the ending of the Cold War, and, perhaps, the character of George Bush. But in the years since then the problem has been different. What we have seen has been a pattern of indiscriminate and irresolute—but unrelenting—busyness, of interfering and lecturing, of a promiscuous though largely ineffectual use of force and of sanctions. It is a pattern of behavior that is alienating an increasing number of states and that, if persisted in, will ultimately be dangerous for the United States.

I believe that the most useful role that Britain can sensibly play as a friend and ally of the United States is to urge discrimination, prudence and restraint on it. For it is those qualities and only those qualities—not a faith in American exceptionalism—that will in the long run enable the United States to avoid the usual fate of assertive hegemons.

* * *

I HAVE RESTRICTED myself so far to discussing the concept of an English-speaking union from the point of view of Britain and the United States. But as I have spent over a third of my life in Australia and intend to return there, a brief concluding word on that country may be in order.

When I first arrived in Australia in 1955, many in that country still spoke unaffectedly of Britain as "Home", though they might not have ever been within ten thousand miles of it. But even at that time affection coexisted with a robust Australian nationalism, and it would have been a mistake to interpret that usage as reflecting a desire for a return to some sort of political unity with the United Kingdom.

It would be a much more egregious error to conclude today—as I suspect some advocates of an Anglosphere do—that the result of the referendum on the monarchy held in 1999 in any way indicates that the majority of Australians now would be receptive to any such arrangement. The result of the referendum reflected a combination of satisfaction with the status quo and confusion in the ranks of the republicans, rather than any desire to enter into a new, Western-oriented system. Australia continues to attach pragmatic importance to its alliance with the United States. But a combination of its much strengthened economic links with Asia, the British withdrawal from "East of Suez", and the scant regard shown by Britain for its ties with Australia and other ex-Dominions when it entered what was then the European Community in 1973 mean that the ties with Britain are much attenuated.

As the children and grandchildren of Australians who fought with and for Britain in two world wars line up in the "Others" entrance queue at Heathrow, while the descendants of the Germans and Italians whom their fathers fought come in through the "British and Europeans" gate, few of them are thinking of an English-speaking union. □

[3]Burke, "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with Respect to France", in *Works of Edmund Burke* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1901), vol. 4, p. 457.

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VOL. XV ENERO / FEBRERO 2001 NUM. 79

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"THE way America treats the other major states when they are in decline will influence how these states treat America when—*not if*—they recover."

—*G. John Ikenberry*

"OUR own times offer no built-in resistance to the historical process of liberal success and illibera backlash. There is no iron law that decrees the triumph of the market."

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"LIKE America in its activities throughout the world, the EU risks overextending itself in Europe with commitments that its own political structure will not sustain."

—*David Calleo*

"SHANGHAI, once a symbol of everything bad that the world had done to China and, worse, a major weapon that served Western interests against Chinese ones, is on balance better seen as something else entirely—the incubator and disseminator of the creatively modern."

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"IT IS the phenomenon of Mbeki's and the ANC's support for Mugabe—betraying the entire human rights tradition of the South African liberation struggle—that has given the Zimbabwean crisis its truly continental and tragic significance."

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"THE importance of habit in politics is something never to be underestimated, particularly in the case of people who don't think very much."

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